

X

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN ISAIAH

by

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INTRODUCTION

The problem with which this thesis is concerned is that of assessing the political proclamations of the prophet Isaiah of Jerusalem within the context of the religio-political setting of Israel as he knew it, and thus to demonstrate, within the various areas of political concern, the extent to which Isaiah's message was dominated by traditional and cultic associations, and the extent to which he varied his proclamations and molded his traditional backgrounds in response to the political events of his world. There will emerge from the study a view of the prophet which will portray him as a man standing squarely in the midst of cultic traditions inherited out of both Yahwistic and pre-Israelite Jerusalemite backgrounds, manipulating, shaping, and using these traditions with great skill and considerable accuracy to present the ever creative message of Yahweh within the midst of the historic developments of the eighth century B.C.

The position which Isaiah held within the ranks of government and religion must remain inexactly defined for the time being, though there are certain quite definite hints as to the type of place which he occupied in Jerusalem society. The assessing of that position hinges upon whether or not Isaiah as a religionist was a part of the Jerusalemite priesthood, whether or not as a prophet he was a member of the band of cult prophets, whose existence and function has lately been the special concern of certain scholars in Scandinavia and Britain, and whether or not as a political

spokesman, he was an official in the Jerusalem government.

Though real evidence for his being a priest is lacking, and his keen rational awareness of the political realities of his time seem to place him outside the ranks of the bands of ecstatic prophets, itinerant or otherwise, there are, nevertheless, strong indications of his proximity to official religion. The fact that his connections with the temple and the cult were close has been ably demonstrated by certain determined studies by Scandinavian scholars of the prophetic phenomenon both in Israel and in peripheral cultures, though it must be remembered that an established alliance between certain cult prophetic groups and prophetic material in the Psalms would not necessarily implicate Isaiah himself. It is questionable, in regarding a figure who played as dominating a role in politics as he did, whether one can ally him at all closely with the associations of cult prophets whose functions, as pointed out by Haldar, were more narrowly circumscribed than those of Isaiah himself. He did receive his call vision in the setting of the temple, and in chapters 9 and 11, he seems to borrow heavily upon what were coronation and enthronement liturgies, which presumably could have been in the custody of the temple. But this consideration must be balanced out by the realization of the rather noticeable lack of priestly language, and forms in the remainder of the book. Though he seems to have no official relation to the temple, he did have ready access to it, and he seems

acutely aware of the deep meaning of the traditions and religion of his people.

A slightly more viable explanation portrays him as an employee of the royal court. Though he borrows upon the religious traditions of his people, he shows at the same time, great flexibility in relating these traditions to the press of world situations by altering and molding their contents from the forms in which they were originally uttered, to fit the demands of his time. Far from being a mere conservationist of religious forms, he shows himself to be a sensitive and flexible statesman. He was in no way aloof from the political realities of his day, but assumed the role of a practical diplomat, approaching rulers of state with precise instructions as to the direction they were to pursue in specific situations. He seems to have had easy access to the kings, (Is. 7:3; 38:1; 39:3) and indeed was probably considered by them as a personal advisor and confidant. In the narratives surrounding the Syro-Ephraimitic war, he seems to impose himself upon Ahaz, but Hezekiah actually calls upon him for his opinions in the midst of ~~crucial~~ ^{crucial} ~~crisis~~ situations. He was also in a position to make use of religious accession oracles of a type used in the coronation and enthronement of the king, a fact which shows his proximity to both the religious and political orders, and in II Chronicles 26:22, he appears to have composed official records for the monarchy.

The fact that he probably did not hold a specific office in the administration of local affairs is to be inferred from the fact that nowhere in his book is his attitude toward domestic issues to be found in the form of conceptualized governmental programs. It is Ahaz who is inspecting the water system and Isaiah who is questioning the king's motives, and it is the prophet who laments the degenerate social structure, but not who administers that structure. Nonetheless, an examination of his prophetic oracles shows him to be a leading social thinker and critic, and a man of immense domestic resourcefulness and social insight.

His active role in international affairs, reflected in his numerous foreign oracles, seems to define his position much more closely, and may well lead to the conclusion advanced by some scholars that he was a member of the king's council as an advisor on diplomatic affairs, or even a scribe of the official court records and diplomatic documents. It is in this role that he displays an unparalleled grasp, both as an official observer of historic events and as a voice in the framing of public and official opinion. As a diplomatic advisor to Ahaz and Hezekiah, he strode like a giant, for half a century, across the international scene, guiding his nation through grave hours of tragedy and crisis. As a result of this association with the rulers and events of the eighth century, he offers, on the subject of international relations, a wealth of comment commensurate with his long

diplomatic career.

Because of this rather unique prophetic stance, it has been suggested by certain American scholars that prophecy itself was a political office, and that the chief content of Israel's literature is a concern for what G. Ernest Wright has called 'the politics of God'. As much as this position may contain a deep truth in Isaiah's case, it must not be thought that this realization eliminates any and all discussion regarding the role of the cult, either in Israelite religion and politics, or in the thought of Isaiah. There was not a dichotomy between religion and politics of a type to which the modern world is accustomed, such that one could be thought of as at any time dominating the other. The king, whose role was central in society, was also the one who stood at the crossroads between God and men, personifying humanity before God, and representing God before men, and within this tradition Isaiah stood firmly, as will be seen in the course of this study.

Indeed, this cultic background which Israel shared, with certain modifications, with the peripheral near eastern cultures, is entirely necessary for any deep examination and understanding of Isaianic thought. For it is precisely at this point of cultural and theological foundations to the prophetic message that Isaiah seems to be distinctly separate from prophets such as Amos, Hosea, and Jeremiah. Many have noted in these prophets the number of references

to the exodus motif, and the conscious attempt to build the foundations of social and political thought upon the terms of the Mosaic covenant. There seems to be also, in these prophets, little or no reliance upon concepts such as the Zion motif, the royal theology, and certain reiterated legal stipulations whose roots are clearly discernable in certain Canaanite and otherwise peripheral cultural contexts. In Isaiah all of this is reversed. Here there has been noted a stark absence of the exodus motif, a borrowing of certain laws and concerns from Canaanite society, and as chapter three will point out, a conscious attempt to build a theory of social order, not upon the Mosaic covenant, but upon the twin traditions of the Zion motif and the royal theology. It is the opinion of this writer that this distinctive position of Isaiah has not been enough honored by scholars who have taken upon themselves the writing of works generalizing the theology of the Israelite prophets.

In an even deeper sense, the prophet was distinctly a product of the Jerusalem of his period, in that he represented not only the traditions common to Jerusalem's pre-Israelite Canaanite backgrounds, but that in him that set of traditions was merged with the concept of Yahweh as high god, a motif borrowed from the primitive Yahwism of the previous amphictyonic culture. For Israel of the monarchical period was a hybrid culture, an originally tribal faith cloaked in the garb of urban Canaanite society and subsumed under a highly syncretistic borrowing of general near eastern cultural,

mythological, and theological forms. The grand symbol of this merger of two distinct religio-cultural systems was the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem and its eventual incorporation into the temple of Solomon. In that act the primitive Yahwism of the period of the Judges, with its concept of a single high god as the ruler of his people, was merged with a traditional royal theology, emphasizing the centrality of Zion as the divine dwelling place, the temple as the religious center of the nation, the king as the mediator between God and men, and the continuance of the royal dynasty as the source of prosperity and stability of the country. This merger of two cultural patterns was finalized in the Davidic covenant.

It will be the purpose of this thesis to show how, and to what extent, Isaiah was a product of this Jerusalemite culture, in what sense he was molded by it, and in what sense he molded the cultural traditions themselves under the impact of historic events. There will emerge from the following pages, the idea that Isaiah (1) founded the intent and substance of his oracles upon a Jerusalemite tradition which represented an amalgamation of Yahwistic faith with pre-Israelite traditions, and which included the concepts of Zion as the holy mountain, the dwelling place of Yahweh, and the Davidic monarchy as the source of prosperity and stability for the country, rather than upon the exodus and Mosaic covenant, and (2) molded, manipulated, and used these

inherited traditions in response to the impact of the specific historic circumstances of his time, showing himself to be a creative political realist and astute statesman.

In order to explore this topic, the thesis is broken down into four chapters. Chapter one will present a survey of the concept of kingship in the ancient Near East and in Israel, in order to establish a context within which to view Isaiah's proclamations regarding the Davidic dynasty. Chapter two will deal with Isaiah's relation to and thoughts regarding the Davidic monarchy, as seen in his confrontation with Ahaz and his proclamation of the Immanuel sign. Chapter three will develop Isaiah's domestic policy on the basis of the Zion and Davidic traditions, and chapter four will explore the prophet's thought in his presumed role as an advisor and confidant to Judaeen kings on the subject of international relations.

It has been a rewarding privilege to be able to explore the topic which is set forth here, both because of Isaiah's centrality and uniqueness among the prophets, and also because this study represents another, and unexplored side of a problem which was originally presented in 1963 as a B.D. thesis. I have Professor G.W. Anderson to thank for suggesting the topic to me, as well as for numerous remarks in and out of class which have contributed greatly to the clarification of my ideas. The bulk of my appreciation, however, must be expressed to my advisor, Dr. R. E. Clements, whose knowledge

and insight have led me into areas of scholarship hitherto unknown and unappreciated, whose books, articles, and many patient hours of guidance have shaped my thoughts profoundly, and whose personal friendship has been an inspiration which will be remembered long after this thesis topic is forgotten.

CHAPTER ONE

KINGSHIP IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND IN ISRAEL

Any study of the political proclamations of Isaiah, the prophet, must begin with an understanding of the political environment and religious climate within which these proclamations were made, the type of political and religious practices in vogue at the time, the relationship of religion to politics, and the nature of the monarchy as conceived in the national theology in Israel. For Isaiah, during his ministry, stood squarely within the context of a monarchical system of government, which for all the attacks directed upon it by certain prophets and discontented countrymen, had been in existence for several centuries.

While the monarchy of Isaiah's time was nothing new, neither was it an inherent factor in Israelite history and thought. "The Israelite monarchy came into existence long after the nation had invaded Canaan; and Old Testament tradition bears witness to the fact that it was a copy of Canaanite kingship."¹ It was conceived as the necessary means of warding off the increased menace of the Philistine threat, and of providing for the Israelites the same stable form of government which they witnessed all about them in peripheral nations, and which had earlier characterized the Canaanite political structure of the very land which they now inhabited. Refusing Samuel's counsel against this inevitable move toward consolidation of the political structure, they raised their demand, "No, but we will have a king over us, that we

1. Sigmund Mowinckel, He That Cometh, trans. by G. W. Anderson, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1959, p. 21.

also may be like all the nations..." (I Samuel 8: 19 - 20). History would lead one to expect such copying, for it was in the realms of social customs, political institutions, material culture and military force that the Canaanites and neighboring powers were ultimately superior to the tribal amphyctyony which characterized Israelite social and political organization during the period of the judges. Being the closest at hand, in both war and peace, it would naturally be from the Canaanites that such advances would come, and the fact that they did was more than once negatively reflected in the chagrin of the prophets of the Mosaic covenant.

But to posit the reliance of Israelite development upon the social and political customs of peripheral nations involves automatically the conjecture that a pattern of social, religious, and political life characteristic of the ancient near east can be ascertained through the study of cultural parallelisms and arch^etypes, and that it can be further shown that Israel borrowed or participated in them to some degree. The foundation for such a notion, ably begun in the work of Gunkel and Gressmann, has been changed, expanded, and defended in our own day by a not inconsiderable group of scholars, particularly in Britain and Scandinavia.² The basic contention

2. Ivan Engnell, Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East, Uppsala, Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri, 1943. Mowinckel, op. cit. C.J. Gadd, Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East, Schweich Lectures, 1945, London, Oxford University Press, 1948. Also the works of A.R. Johnson and S.H. Hooke to be referred to later in this thesis.

of this group, whose work is now and again referred to as "patternism" or "myth and ritual" is that, "...the cult of all ancient near eastern religions was dominated by a coherent complex of ritual and myth, which served as a pattern for all these religions, and which had its home in Babylonia."³ The many tales and epics, lately the product of archaeological research, and which now form the available cultural background of these ancient civilizations, are identified by this school as texts bearing ancient myths and religious rituals⁴ reflecting a group of organically related practices common to all near eastern traditions to a greater or lesser degree.⁵ Most common among these ritual myths were those originally used in conjunction with the annual New Year Festival, during which a ritual combat against the forces of chaos was enacted, with the king as the leading participant, and the fertility and stability of the country was reaffirmed for the coming year. Within these rituals it is possible to discern ancient man's understanding of the natural and social order, and the extent to which the king embodied, for him, the symbol of control over the tendency of both of them to revert to chaos.

3. Mowinkel, op. cit., p. 23.

4. S. H. Hooke, "Myth and Ritual Reconsidered," The Siege Perilous, London, SCM Press LTD., p. 177.

5. S. Szikszai, "King, Kingship," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 2, New York, Abingdon Press, p. 16.

The threshold traversed by these thinkers into the precincts of Israelite practice was provided in large part by the book of Psalms, and more specifically those groups which they chose to call 'royal psalms' and 'enthronement psalms'.⁶ In their analysis of these psalms as ritual texts, they attempted to show that the mythological conception of the king which was found in Israel corresponded in large measure to that in other near eastern cultures, and that not merely stylistically, but such as to reflect the real religious faith and sociological structure expressed in the cultic experience. To them, near eastern religion and political activity unfolded as one vast and coherent panorama of cultic experience with its local variations and hues blending into one common entity, through which national dynasties were substantiated and preserved, and men reaffirmed in their relationship to the powers of the universe which supplied their land with fertility and their lives with prosperity and support.⁷

It becomes obvious to every student of near eastern culture, at some point or other, that there is an obvious truth in the idea of a common ritual pattern, a Kult^uurkreis, from which all local patterns can be seen to emanate. But there is the corresponding danger that the pattern may be allowed to engulf and hide the local variations which are

6. Mowinckel, op. cit., pp. 26 - 27. Also, Sigmund Mowinckel, The Psalms in Israel's Worship, Trans. by D. R. Ap-Thomas, Vol. 1, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1962, pp. 106 & 192. (Henceforth referred to as "The Psalms".)

7. Mowinckel, "The Psalms," op. cit., p. 112.

as much a reality as the theme. Indeed, quite another group of scholars has concerned itself with the task of emphasizing local differences in thought and practice, sometimes to the virtual exclusion of any theme of similarity.⁸ It is to their credit that they have reminded other scholars that the evidence for such a common cultural pattern is largely circumstantial, and that more than once the pictures of particular cultures have had to be severely trimmed to fit the frames constructed for them out of Babylonian materials. Indeed, this tendency has led C. R. North to comment that the difference between seeing a thoroughgoing divine kingship in Israel with Mowinckel, or seeing the king purely as Yahweh's servant and a mere man, depends upon whether one begins with the peripheral cultures as an Umwelt and works in, or whether one begins with the Israelite prophetic consciousness and works out.⁹

No doubt the truth of the matter lies somewhere between these seemingly irreconcilable positions, for as Gerald Cooke has rightly remarked, "...an either/or statement in

8. Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel, New York, Mc Graw Hill Book Company, Inc. C.R. North, "The Religious Aspects of Hebrew Kingship," ZAW, Vol. 50, 1932, pp. 8 - 38. Gerald Cooke, "The Israelite King as the Son of God," ZAW, Vol. 73, 1961, pp. 202-225. John Bright, A History of Israel, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1959. W. F. Albright, "Historical Adjustments of Political Authority in the Near East," History, Archaeology and Christian Humanism, New York, Mc Graw-Hill Book Company, 1964. Henri Frankfort, Kingship and the Gods, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1948.

9. North, op. cit., p. 35.

this matter does not do justice to the evidence." ¹⁰ It is possible that the eschatological and cultic usages of the psalms are not entirely incompatible with the historical usages. In the light of this hope it will be worthwhile to survey the concepts of kingship and king function which have emerged from the responsible study of peripheral near eastern cultures and then to assess Israelite kingship in their light.

EGYPTIAN KINGSHIP

In no civilization of the Near East was the concept of divine kingship so thoroughgoing as in the Old Kingdom of Egypt. The origins of that kingship and the customs which made it peculiar to ancient Egypt are rooted in a past so remote that only the faintest traces of its evolution can be found, and its actual origins must be largely conjectured. Presumably "a ruling family of Upper Egypt came north, by conquest set up a capital at Memphis near the junction of the Two Lands (Upper and Lower Egypt), and thus started a long series of dynasties, a series which lasted for about three thousand years." ¹¹ Though historical figures are difficult to discern at this early period, it is probable that the consolidation took place under one Menes,

10. Cooke, op. cit., p. 206.

11. Albright, op. cit., p. 181. John A. Wilson, The Culture of Ancient Egypt, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1951 & 1963, pp. 43 - 44.

and that by his time the kingship was already a thoroughly well developed institution, demanding of all subjects the deepest reverence. ¹²

In the Egyptian system, the Pharaoh was God, embodying in himself the incarnation of a range of deities all symbolizing the various aspects of man's natural and corporate life, and providing at society's center the intense power of the godhead. In Egyptian inscriptions he is called 'God' without reservation or qualification, being referred to as 'the god', or 'the good god', the Son of Ra the creator god. ¹³ As the incarnation of all deity, he embodied and held in equilibrium all the powers of life and forces of the universe by full participation in the mythology of his people. He was life and death, the gods Horus and Seth, who were in conflict with each other, and yet out of this tension which he held within himself, the Pharaoh became the spring of creativity and new life. ¹⁴ Further, he spans two generations as both father and son. "By death he becomes Osiris, and exercises his beneficial activity as the creator of fertility in field, herd, and nation; and as the living one he is at the same time Horus, the son who avenges Osiris and brings

12. James Henry Breasted, A History of Egypt, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1948, p. 74.

13. de Vaux, op. cit., p. 111.

14. Mowinckel, op. cit., p. 28. H. W. Fairman, "The Kingship Rituals of Egypt," SytH. Hooke, ed., Myth, Ritual and Kingship, Oxford, At the Clarendon Press, 1958, pp. 75 - 76.

him to life again.¹⁵ following Osiris' death at the hands of Seth. In that Re, in the form of Pharaoh went into the queen and of her begat the new king, the new Pharaoh was considered divine from the beginning and therefore considered all goddesses as his mothers.

The power of the Pharaoh was therefore absolute, and was reinforced by his divinity. In theory all property belonged to him, and while he commanded an impressive hierarchy of mortal functionaries according to a feudal system of government, he alone acted finally on behalf of the government and people, and he was the sole recipient of his people's worship. He was the embodiment of all "ma'at", or justice, and therefore all law was personal in nature, and originated in him. Ma'at included everything which would be covered by the English words, "right", "just", "true", or "in order". "It was the cosmic force of harmony, order, stability, and security, coming down from the first creation as the organizing quality of created phenomena and reaffirmed at the accession of each god-king of Egypt."¹⁶ Further, he personified the "Ka", or "life force" of all his subjects, and looked to the god Re to supply him with the force of Ka. He represented the power which helped his people through all periods of dangerous transition or change, and in him and through his power, the two kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt were perpetually held together.

15. Mowinckel, op. cit., p. 28. de Vaux, op. cit., p. 111.

16. Wilson, op. cit., p. 48.

Being divine the Pharaoh represented the presence of the eternal in the temporal order. To the human mind the future is an uncertain thing and the passing of time brings change and fear. The ravages of time can be conquered only insofar as man, at some point can feel the eternal order impinging upon the temporal universe, providing for him an anchor in a sea of flux. Thus had the Pharaoh been from the beginning and would be for all time. In him men participated freely in one who was eternal, a fact which allowed the Egyptian peasant to take a rather calm attitude toward whatever change he did witness.

Because divine kingship in Egypt had its origins in the dim past, no firm or final reason may be given for its peculiar development. It is speculated by scholars that the security of the concept was not unrelated to the type of natural security which is inherent in the Nile Valley itself. Egypt was a land cut off from major contacts with other countries and thus enjoyed a happy sense of security from outside attack, and the flooding of the Nile each year supplied the layer of rich topsoil which would provide the land with the fertility to sustain life until the following year. The geography of the country and the forces of nature were benevolent, and their continued benevolence was insured in the person of the Pharaoh, in whom these forces were personified. ¹⁷It was he in whom lay the responsibility

17. Wilson, op. cit., p. 45.

for the transition from one fertile year to the next. Such a transition point was the New Year Festival, at which, each year the king's accession was celebrated, and any possible threat of the forces of chaos or infertility eliminated.¹⁸ This festival in turn was characteristic of the many festivals and religious functions in which the role and place of the Pharaoh was paramount, for as well as being the ruler of the country, he was its high priest. The temple service was conducted by and for the king, that he might obtain life, health, abundance, power, and a multitude of other blessings,¹⁹ and in theory he was the officiant in every temple in the land. The consequence of this concept of kingship was that theoretically everything in religious and secular life was linked with the king, and every religious ceremony and ritual was, in a sense, a royal ritual,²⁰ affirming the power of the Pharaoh over all threats to the people, and establishing again the security and fertility of the land. When he came to the end of his life upon earth, his crossing into the world beyond and his full identification with Osiris through the ritual of embalming and burial, coupled with the new king's accession to the throne, secured the entire world order against any threat of its disintegration into chaos, and created life anew. As creator god, he now insured the

18. Mowinckel, op. cit., p. 29.

19. Harold H. Nelson, "The Egyptian Temple," The Biblical Archaeologist Reader, G. E. Wright, ed., New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961, p. 155.

20. Fairman, op. cit., p. 76.

continuance of the natural order, and as the new Pharaoh, he insured the welfare of the land.

MESOPOTAMIAN KINGSHIP

As early as the time of the Sumerians, the idea of kingship in Mesopotamia differed considerably from its corresponding concept in Egypt, not only as a matter of degree, but more radically as a matter of principle, and due to the many changes of rule in Mesopotamia's history, the basic theory of kingship did not remain as consistent as was the pattern in Egypt. It was from time to time acknowledged, in early days, that the king was divine in character. However among the later Babylonians and Assyrians this was perhaps a little less apparent.²¹ And while the king was divine in character, and stood closest to the gods, he was still regarded as a man among men, a primus inter pares, a great man, a national leader in war and peace.

The basic difference undoubtedly lay in the fact that while in Egypt, the Pharaoh was god himself, in Mesopotamia, the king was always a man chosen by the gods, and to that extent could be thought of as participating in divinity. He was a viceregent, a divine servant of the gods chosen to maintain the reign of the gods.²² He bore a sonship to the gods which was by adoption rather than by nature, and his divinity was functional rather than metaphysical.

21. de Vaux, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

22. Albright, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

Therefore, unlike the Egyptian Pharaoh, the king in Mesopotamia was never worshipped by the people.

Once again, scholars theorize that this particular concept of kingship arose in part due to geographic and climatic factors which formed the environment in which Mesopotamian life was lived out. Unlike the isolated security and relative stability of the Nile Valley, the land of the two rivers had no well defined frontiers and lay open to the nomadic tribes of the desert and the mountain tribes of the north and east.²³ It was dependent upon the rain and weather for fertility, factors which did not always bring blessing, and the Tigris and Euphrates, unlike the Nile, could be as often be the source of chaos and destruction as the source of stability and fertility. There was, therefore, both in life and in men's view of life, a greater element of danger, suspense, frustration and fear, than was shared by their counterparts in Egypt.

Correspondingly, the cult functioned, not as in Egypt for the affirmation of an almost inevitable set of powers which strengthened and stabilized existence during the momentary disturbance of transition, but rather reflected the vital importance of the life and death struggle which was the lot of all of Mesopotamia's inhabitants. The powers of chaos did often get the upper hand and leave in their wake a countryside which reeked of the stench of death and a future

23. Mowinckel, op. cit., p. 32.

whose promise was bleak.

As in Egypt, life itself was at stake in the cult, but unlike Egypt, the cult had a major role to play in attempting to defeat the forces of chaos, and continually renewing the lost forces of order. In such a cult, even the gods were at times powerless against chaos, and needed continually to be strengthened. The king, far from being the embodiment of inevitable order, became the mediator between the gods and men, subservient to the gods, and the ruler over and leader of men. He sacrificed to the gods and served them so that their strength might be sustained and renewed, and he carried out their orders, so that law and just rule might be maintained among men.

Mesopotamian art, in contrast with Egyptian, always depicts the king as leader of his men, and yet as one of them: his army and his servants are active comrades in arms, and co-operate with him. His relation to the gods is that of a worshipper, not an equal: he represents his people before them.²⁴

As in Egypt, the king played a dominant role in the corporate religious life of the people, and one which reflected the role of the cult and kingship ideology of Mesopotamia in the same way that the Pharaoh's role reflected Egyptian patterns. True to a number of other near eastern cultures, the king participated in an annual New Year Festival which re-enacted the creation of the world, and a deliverance from the domination of the powers of chaos, which had again brought about the death of the god of fertility and now

24. 24. Ibid., p. 33.

threatened all life and order with destruction.²⁵ The ritual represented Marduk's initial imprisonment and humiliation by the forces of chaos and his subsequent victory over the chaos dragon, Tiamat.

In this drama the king played an important part in procuring for the community a renewed harmonious integration with nature. On the day of atonement,

...the king must first relinquish his office into the hands of the god, and then receive it back from him and be reinstated as king. On behalf of the people he must first do penance, be divested of his regalia, submit to humiliating treatment at the hands of the high priest, make a confession in which he protests that he has not sinned, that he has not neglected the worship of the god, that he has not injured Babylon, and so on. He then receives the promise of Marduk's favor, and is again arrayed in crown and scepter and reinstated as king. 26

In this rite the king became for his people the symbol of the lowest state of chaos and destruction, as well as of the restoration of all stability, fertility, continuity and order of life. As a mediator between gods and men, he helped the gods to establish the cosmic order for the ensuing year, and helped men to preserve the social order necessary to the continuity of life. This was ultimately accomplished by his holding in his hands all governmental functions, legislative, judiciary, and executive.²⁷

25. Ibid., p. 40. Szikszai, op. cit., p. 15.

26. Mowinckel, op. cit., p. 41.

27. Albright, op. cit., p. 184.

In principle, therefore, the king was also a priest, and in charge of the religious welfare of the people. He was the head of all priests and in a real sense the ultimate legitimizer of their functions. From a very early period he appointed the high priest of the city's temple, and even in the last period of Mesopotamian history, the board of sacerdotal officials which ran the temple organization had to include a representative of the king.²⁸

In summary, the king in Mesopotamia was not a god, as in Egypt, but was endowed with a divine vocation insofar as he was chosen by the gods, and invested by them with super-human power. He was like a god, and an image of the god, perhaps, but nonetheless a great man, and a man among men. His authority on earth was derived from the gods, but his task upon earth was to represent men before the gods, to help the gods to restore cosmic order, and men to preserve the social order. He was a priestly figure. One cannot do better than to use for him the title which Hammurabi used of himself, 'the shepherd'.

CANAANITE KINGSHIP

The role of the king in Canaanite culture is more difficult to assess, owing largely to the lack of substantial evidence to provide a unified, empirically verifiable account. Until the discovery of the Ugaritic texts at Ras Shamra,

28. A. Leo Oppenheim, "The Mesopotamian Temple," G. E. Wright, ed., The Biblical Archaeologist Reader, New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961, p. 166.

evidence from Canaan consisted, in the main, of Phoenician royal inscriptions, the Egyptian papyrus of Wen-Amon, and scattered references in the Old Testament, in all of which Canaanite motifs could be inferred only indirectly. The Ras Shamra texts, while they have provided a flood of new materials for the direct analysis of this problem, have provided alongside, the problem of how the texts themselves are to be considered, and what relationship they bear to Canaanite life. Engnell, whose view is extreme, and largely modified by other scholars, considered them to be ritual texts of the Canaanite cult, reflecting de facto the Canaanite view that the king was of divine origin, identified with the high god and in particular with the fructification deity, having power over the rains and the crops, and in every other way reflecting the common divine-king ideology which Engnell found in other ancient near eastern cultures.²⁹

More subtly, Mowinckel, while following Engnell's idea of a common near eastern cultural pattern, considers the texts individually, judges their type, and relates them to their Sitz im Leben in Canaan, before inferring motifs from them. The Karit text, for example, he views not as a ritual text, but as an epic of a legendary king and founder of a dynasty, who appears as a demigod, but is at the same time, in relation to the gods, a human being.³⁰ He then reasons

29. Engnell, op. cit., p. 173.

30. Mowinckel, op. cit., p. 52.

that it is possible to see behind and underlying the epic, the typical forms and patterns according to which the Canaanites thought of their king. His final conclusions regarding the king ideology at Ras Shamra appear not greatly different from those he reached with regard to Mesopotamian culture, so that he is able to state that "...the god Karit has undergone the same development as the Babylonian Gilgamesh, who was two thirds divine and one third human and who went forth in order to escape death and yet had to die." ³¹

Another factor which must be taken into account in the assessment of the Ugaritic texts is the geographical and historical circumstances ~~under~~ ⁱⁿ which Canaan lived and produced ~~the~~ ^{its} texts. Whatever the ancient powers of the king in their primal conception, they undoubtedly underwent modification through the vicissitudes of history, for Ugarit was but a minor power, subject to the historical changes forced upon it by the mammoth power structures of Egypt and Mesopotamia as well as the Aramaean invasions with which were associated the Hebrew settlement of Palestine. ³² Also, unlike Mesopotamia with its more powerful urban economy, one gets the impression that Ugaritic culture was more influenced by agricultural life, and would therefore exhibit a more defined interest in fertility myth. The scholar surveying

31. Ibid., p. 52.

32. John Gray, "Canaanite Kingship in Theory and Practice," VT, Vol. 2, 1952, p. 219.

these texts must bear such local factors in mind.

While it is probably wide of the mark to dismiss all possibility of cultic significance in the Ras Shamra texts, it is also necessary to realize that any knowledge of Canaanite kingship must be obtained indirectly from the texts by assessing the cultural values represented by the motifs in these epics, especially those of Karit, and Dan'il - Aqhat. The Karit epic is definitely a legend about men, a tale whose epic proportions can be derived both from its purely legendary character and from its remoteness in the history of Ugarit itself. "Karit is no ordinary historical king. The theme of the epic is the securing of posterity to perpetuate the dynasty."³³ It presents the king as the pillar of society and the source of prosperity and continuity by describing the wedding of the king, the birth of the family and the fertilization of the fields through the cult, a motif also characteristic of the Dan'il - Aqhat legend.

It is difficult to deny that large portions of these epics speak of myth, inasmuch as the themes of cultic myth seem to pervade the plots of the epics themselves.

Karit is the specially chosen and trusted servant and son of the supreme god El. He is one of the gods. As in Babylonia, the royal child has been suckled by goddesses. His bride, the noble virgin, has several features which belong to the fertility goddess; and the birth of the son guarantees life and prosperity to the royal dynasty and the people, like the birth of the son of the god in the myth. The life and health of the king mean blessing and righteous rule (judgment) in the land.³⁴

33. Mowinckel, op. cit., p. 53.

34. Ibid., p. 54.

At the same time it must be noted that though everlasting life may be wished for the king, he is mortal and must die. Like the Babylonian king, he may well have stood as a man among men, an 'able man',³⁵ a representative of men before the gods, and a representative of the gods before men.

If this logic is followed according to Babylonian parallels, he may well also have played the traditional cultic role as the one who insured the fertility and stability of life. "The entire religion was dominated by the idea of the dying and rising fertility god, by the thought of 'life out of death'. The myth and the cultic drama describe how Ba'al dies in the conflict with Mot, the power of death, and how his beloved, the virgin Anat, searches for him, how she defeats Mot, how Ba'al rises again or is born again in the son he begets by Anat, and, further how he defeats the hostile powers of chaos, is enthroned on the divine mountain in the north as king of the gods and men, how he is united with Anat, the mother goddess and goddess of fertility, how he recreates the universe, symbolized by the restoration of his temple."³⁶ If this is the case, there is probably operative here a king ideology which saw the king as the chief intermediary between the power of the gods and the need of men for fertility in the earth and stability in the social order, through the power and continuance of the royal dynasty.

35. Gray, op. cit., p. 200.

36. Mowinckel, op. cit., p. 53.

Of interest also for this analysis is John Gray's mention that the king was responsible for justice and order as a part of his ideal function. In the Dan'il - Aqhat text he quotes:

He rises and takes his seat at the opening of the gate,
In the place of the notables who are in the piazza;
He decides the case of the widow,
He judges the suit of the orphan.

The point of the passage is that on the birth of his heir, Dan'il's succession is secured, and he feels once more an effective king, emerging from the seclusion imposed by the crisis of the birth of a son. In the Karit text similar language is used by the king's presumptuous heir YSB, who complains to Karit;

Thou decidest not the case of the widow,
Thou judgest not the suit of the oppressed. ³⁷

Besides the obvious references to a similar function of the king in Isaiah's prophecies, these texts point to the fact that the law, as well as the administration of the social and labor functions of society in Canaan ³⁸ were apparently under the control of the monarchy.

One further point, mentioned briefly by Gray, and of special interest for this thesis later on, is that there seems to be evidence for the fact that the king was seen as bearing some responsibility for international affairs, a factor which may have arisen from the crossroads position

37. This text and the one above, quoted from Gray, op. cit., p. 209.

38. Ibid., p. 214.

occupied by Ugarit among the other nations. Gray infers this on the basis of a dispatch from King Niqmadu to the Hittite Subbiluliuma in which he hands over a rich assortment of tribute, showing that the king was responsible for distributing the wealth of the kingdom, even to the extent of settling international obligations. The inference suffers slightly from the realization that Niqmadu, in this instance, is operating as a submissive vassal, but it is significant nonetheless that the dealing is carried out through the king. ³⁹

If the Ras Shamra texts may be considered with the degree of literalism with which they have been treated here, one may conjecture that in many respects there were great similarities between Canaanite and Babylonian kingship ideology and function. At the same time there must be recognized, as has been pointed out, those differences in emphasis arising from Canaan's long vassalship to both Egypt and Mesopotamia, and the inevitable fluctuation of character which such a position in the ancient Near East would involve.

KINGSHIP IN ISRAEL

It is against this background of kingship in the peripheral ancient near eastern cultures that one must consider Israelite kingship, for no matter the degree to which one may feel the Israelites borrowed from these

39. Ibid., p. 215.

peripheral cultures, their life was, nonetheless, lived out in this context. In fact it is often possible to discern on the part of those who are over hasty to discount Israelite borrowing from Canaanite and other backgrounds, a rationalist bias which would be more true to an analysis of western cultural motifs than to an understanding of the ancient Near East.

Indeed, the real difficulty in assessing Israelite kingship lies not in its sheer distinctiveness, so much as in the fact that its distinctiveness was constantly intermingled with a certain eclectic nature, belonging to most things Israelite, which caused a number of conflicting motifs inherited from those who went to make up Israel's background to be incorporated into her culture over the centuries. Ezekiel's remark that Jerusalem's origins were mingled found manifestation in a number of Israel's cultural areas. Israel's entry upon Canaan produced a not so simple amalgamation of cultural motifs, which were at war with each other for many long centuries afterwards.

The old population of the country merged into the ruling people and was called by its name. But it communicated its own culture to the ruling people, and thus transformed the latter after its own likeness. The Canaanites became Israelites, but at the same time the Israelites became Canaanite. This process cannot be traced in detail, but its 40 cultural effects appear in all domains.

40. Johannes Pedersen, Israel, Vol. 3 - 4, London, Oxford University Press, 1940, p. 64. This point is also made clear in H. J. Kraus, Psalmen I, Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament, Neukirchen Kreis Moers, Neukirchener Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1960, Exkurs 4, "Die Kulttraditionen Jerusalems," pp. 197-205, and Exkurs 5, "Die Verherrlichung Der Gottesstadt," pp. 342-345.

And the most important of these domains was kingship, an institution which she did not borrow unaltered from either her Canaanite or amphictyonic backgrounds. On the one hand, Israel inherited traditions from the old chieftanship of the semi - nomadic period of the judges. During this era, the position of a tribal chief, or sheikh, was primarily dependent upon his personal qualities, his ability to lead and to settle disputes within and between tribes. "All the traditions about the judges show that they attained their position because, in a given historical situation, they were able to rally the tribe, or several tribes, around themselves, to beat off the enemy, and thus save their people." ⁴¹ Such authority as they gained in war, they often retained in peace. The chieftanship had a peculiar free character which corresponded to the quality of the people and the social organization, and a sort of totality formed under the leadership of an individual in whom the totality rested and was concentrated. ⁴² At the same time, this totality was grounded firmly in a Yahwistic faith which looked upon Yahweh as the real leader in war, to whom every judge or human leader, was subordinate. This period saw its culmination in the figure of Saul, who for all references to him as a ³⁵⁰ was entirely a ruler of the old style.

41. Mowinckel, op. cit., p. 57.

42. Pedersen, op. cit., p. 40.

The reason why Saul came to be regarded as the one who introduced the monarchy was because his chieftanship happened to prepare the way for the monarchy proper.⁴³

The monarchy, of the style which was finally to dominate Israel until the exile, however, was introduced by David, whose origins were in a somewhat different political sphere, and who succeeded as the leader of a new political movement while Saul died trying to defend an old one. It is not unlikely that with the coming of David, that which was more distinctly Canaanite began to show through the Israelite substructure, for with the taking over of Jerusalem for the royal stronghold, Israelite government became heir to deeply entrenched pre-Israelite traditions, which ultimately clothed the basic tenets of Yahwistic faith in the shrouds of a Canaanite type of monarchy. For a clearer understanding of this change, it is possible to use the recent Ugaritic researches, to some extent, as a model, as many of them reveal close parallels to Samuel's description of that phenomenon as it would later exist in Israel. (I Samuel 8)⁴⁴ That the break with Israel's past was radical can be surmised from the fact that

43. Ibid., p. 46.

44. Erwin I. J. Rosenthal, "Some Aspects of the Hebrew Monarchy," JJS, Vol. 9, 1958, pp. 2-3, where he mentions that I. Mendelsohn has recently adduced evidence that Canaanite kingship exactly corresponded to the description we have in I Sam. 8, showing that this passage probably reflects Ugaritic backgrounds rather than representing a projection from the time of the late monarchy back into its beginnings. vid. also Mowinckel, "The Psalms", op. cit., p. 114. Against this vid. de Vaux, op. cit., p. 92. Albright, op. cit., p. 187.

in Judah the dynastic principle was admitted from the outset and sanctioned by divine intervention,⁴⁵ probably because so far as Jerusalem was concerned, that set of traditions had been deeply entrenched from the beginning.

The final form of the Israelite monarchy was the result of the fusion of the traditions of the old chieftanship with the laws, customs and ideas of Canaanite kingship. The original Canaanite kingship had lingered in the background giving rise to early attempts at monarchy on the part of men like Gideon, Abimelek, and Ishbaal, culminating in Saul's comprehensive attempt to weld together a federation embracing all the tribes. The final amalgamation, however, waited for David, whose background lay with the southern tribes, and whose Canaanite city state of Jerusalem lay outside of tribal domains entirely, to supply the necessary ideological background for full monarchy, and for Solomon to redistrict the tribes, breaking down their former loyalties, and to introduce a complete syncretism with inherent and peripheral dynastic cultures. Under these two kings, the monarchy received a theological legitimacy satisfactory to the majority by the transfer of the Ark to Jerusalem and the erection of a temple⁴⁶, whose architecture was chiefly along Canaanite-Phoenician lines. The effectiveness of this amalgamation can be seen in the fact that "...the

45. de Vaux, op. cit., p. 97.

46. Bright, op. cit., p. 203.

house of David continued to occupy the throne for four centuries and remained the center of Jewish national aspirations for many centuries more." ⁴⁷

It is fairly clear that in the Israelite conception of the king, the idea which is central and fundamental is that the king was both regarded as a man among men and as a man above men in many aspects of his person and duties. Mowinckel's idea that the king was regarded as 'divine' or 'superhuman' ⁴⁸ cannot be regarded as wrong, but must be subjected to qualification and more precise definition. He appears as one who is greatly superior to ordinary mortals (I Kings 3: 28; II Samuel 14: 17. 20; 19: 27 ff.), ⁴⁹ and one whose person is regarded as sacrosanct by pious followers of the Israelite faith (I Samuel 24: 7; II Samuel 1: 14. 16.) ⁵⁰, and the greatness of whose character is exhibited by his proximity to the deity, though he is never identified with the deity in any metaphysical sense. ⁵¹

The terminology used with reference to the king's person would seem to bear out his sacrosanct character, although

47. W. F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1942, p. 139. (Henceforth referred to as "Archaeology".)

48. Mowinckel, op. cit., p. 62.

49. North, op. cit., p. 23.

50. Aubrey R. Johnson, "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship," S. H. Hooke, ed., Myth, Ritual, and Kingship, Oxford, At the Clarendon Press, 1958, pp. 208-209.

51. Szikszai, op. cit., p. 16.

there are grave problems in the interpretation of much of it. In Psalm 45: 7 he appears to be addressed as **אֱלֹהִים**,⁵² a term used to describe subordinate supernatural beings, and in Psalm 110: 1 he is called **אֲדֹנָי**, though in this psalm the text is admittedly corrupt. Insofar as he was linked with the Davidic dynasty and the pre-Israelite Jerusalemite traditions, he bore a certain priestly nature through his connection with Melchizedek, the priest of **אל עליון**, a concept which, historical or not, undoubtedly pointed to his role with respect to rightness and righteousness as that role was inherited from pre-Israelite backgrounds.⁵³ And in II Samuel 14: 17. 20, and I Samuel 29: 9, David is referred to as knowing everything 'like an angel of God'.

The king was viewed as Yahweh's anointed, a quality which marked him out as a sacred person endowed with special responsibility for the well being of his people. It ratified his status as the chosen of Yahweh, showing him to be specially commissioned by Yahweh for this high office. In view of the language which is used elsewhere in the Old Testament with regard to the pouring out of Yahweh's spirit, it seems likely that the rite of anointing was also held to

52. The presence of verse 6 in this psalm has traditionally presented many problems of translation and interpretation. However even the weakest of the English renderings seems to be the RSV, "Your divine throne endures for ever and ever."

53. Aubrey R. Johnson, Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel, Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1955, pp. 91-92. (Henceforth referred to as "Sacral Kingship".)

be symbolic of the superhuman power with which the king was henceforth to be activated and by which his behavior might be governed. ⁵⁴

Most significant for the understanding of the king's relation to Yahweh was the aspect of sonship.

The king on the day of his accession and anointing became the son of Yahweh. As (almost) the incarnation among his people of their God, he had a unique role in the life of the community and in the national ⁵⁵ cultus.

He was a servant of Yahweh in a different sense from everyone else. As the son of Yahweh, the God of all the earth, he had a rightful claim to dominion over the whole world. ⁵⁶

In Ps. 2, in reply to the princes of the earth who have conspired against Yahweh and his anointed (v.2), Yahweh declares that it is he who has established his king in Sion (v. 6). The king (or the cantor) then proclaims the decree, the hoq of Yahweh; on this day of sacring he adopts him as his son and promises ⁵⁷ him dominion over all the land (vv. 7-9).

Whoever would plot to overthrow Yahweh's anointed, in however strong a force, would be awed into humble submission.

In considering this role of the king, one must be careful to realize that the sonship relation was purely an adoptive one, as Gerald Cook has convincingly argued. ⁵⁸ Even though

54. Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-208.

55. R. B. Y. Scott, The Relevance of the Prophets, New York, The Mac Millan Company, 1947, p. 186.

56. Mowinckel, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

57. de Vaux, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

58. Cook, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-225.

this aspect of the kingship ideology, in all probability , entered Israel through the Jerusalem royal tradition, it is crucial to note that its use in the Old Testament references (II Samuel 7: 14; Psalms 2: 7; 89: 27/26 ff; and 110) contains an adoption formula which represents an essential and characteristic Israelite modification of royal ideology. In this relationship, the king stands as Yahweh's viceregent before his people.

In this adoptive relationship, the king becomes the mediator of the covenant between Yahweh and his people, the covenant which had been spoken by the prophet Nathan in II Samuel 7. It was an article of faith in Judah that God had made an everlasting covenant with David for the establishment of his dynasty, a promise to which all succeeding kings of Judah were heirs as sons of Yahweh, in the aforementioned sense. This theme is reiterated in Psalms 132 and 89, and along with the passage commonly called "the last words of David" in II Samuel 23: 1-7, bears out the situation within which this covenant relation was affirmed, as well as the intimacy of the relationship between the king and Yahweh in which the king embodied Yahweh's blessing, which meant harmony and prosperity, peace and well being for the whole people.

The king, therefore, represented Yahweh before the people, and just as important, he represented the people before Yahweh. He held a position of supreme importance in the social order, and in a real sense was the embodiment

of all the corporate aims of his people. In this regard, A. R. Johnson has called attention to the importance of the corporate personality in primitive cultures, in which the individual may be regarded as the center of power which extends beyond the contour of the body and mingles with family, tribe, and nation.⁵⁹ The people of Israel, as a psychic whole, found its focus in the royal house, and at any given time, in the royal monarch. National disaster of any drastic or prolonged sort could be attributed to the fact that the king himself had violated the relationship to Yahweh or the sanctions of the group, bringing upon the whole people condemnation. Through the king, as House of David, the people stood in a relationship to Yahweh.

It is important also to remember that in his unique relationship to Yahweh, the king was never held to be identical with Yahweh in either a functional or metaphysical sense. Only in the sense that Yahweh was held to be the true king of Israel, was the royal throne called the throne of Yahweh, (I Chronicles 29: 23) or the throne of the kingship of Yahweh over Israel (I Chronicles 28: 5).⁶⁰ The king, though a sacral person, in a sense a priestly type of figure, was nonetheless a viceregent of Yahweh, responsible on earth for the welfare of Yahweh's people.

59. Johnson, "Sacral Kingship," op. cit., p. 2.

60. de Vaux, op. cit., p. 106.

The priestly character of the king, and his earlier mentioned relationship to the pre-Israelite Melchizedek, the priest of *יְהוָה*, raises the further question of the king's participation in the religious festivals of his people, and his relationship to the other religious functionaries in Israel. That the king played a priestly role can be seen in the fact that David played a central part in the removal of the Ark of Yahweh to Jerusalem, that Solomon offered sacrifices and prayers and consecrated the temple, and that both Ahaz and Hezekiah concerned themselves with details of the temple tradition. Presumably the king's anointing did not make him a priest, per se, but it did make him a sacred person, and in solemn circumstances he could act as the religious head of the people. He had authority over the priests, in that he could punish them (I Samuel 22: 11 - 18; I Kings 2: 26 - 27), regulate their income (II Kings 12: 4 - 16), and institute reforms in the cult. And he, himself, was the channel through which divine blessing flowed to the people.

It is possible too that the king took an active and leading role in an annual New Year Festival, held in the autumn, a festival which celebrated the enthronement of Yahweh. While the origin of the festival lay probably in Canaanite backgrounds, in Yahwism it was completely transformed.

The Canaanite thought that the god himself is renewed has disappeared; and what the king obtains in the cultic festival is not primarily new life and strength, but the renewal and confirmation of the covenant, which is based upon the king's religious and moral virtues⁶¹ and constancy.

The struggle ritually re-enacted was not with mythical powers of chaos but with Israel's - and Yahweh's - historical foes.⁶² In the festival history was renewed, the election and deliverance of Israel were relived and the covenant was again ratified. Israel's future as a people was guaranteed through the reaffirmation of the continuity of the Davidic throne in the promise of Yahweh. In this the king would not have represented the deity, but in the enthronement of Yahweh as king, the Israelite king would have reaffirmed his position in society as it has been described above.

And finally, if the king fulfilled his function as he ought, he was also the guarantee of the people's future and good fortune, its righteousness and peace, for he was the upholder of justice and righteousness and the leader in war.

In saying 'Amen' to the conditions laid down in the Davidic covenant, the king becomes the trustee of Yahweh's chosen people. Henceforth it is his responsibility to defend the nation from internal corruption and external attack; and success in the latter connexion is conditioned by his success in the former.⁶³

61. Mowinckel, op. cit., pp. 81-82.

62. Bright, op. cit., p. 206.

63. Johnson, "Sacral Kingship", op. cit., p. 127.

The king's essential task was to be the instrument of Yahweh's justice and covenant blessing among men, by the teaching and enforcement of the law, by the upholding in himself as well as in his people, the terms of the covenant with Yahweh, and by providing just administration. If the nation is to prosper, the king must be the embodiment of righteousness (צדק - צדקיהו). "That is to say, it is first and foremost his concern to see that the behavior of society at large is thoroughly righteous (צדיק) and that, to this end, the sanctions of the group, particularly the nation's laws, are uniformly observed throughout the different strata of society. " ⁶⁴ The upkeep of the entire country, the court, the army and the state officials, was provided from the king's treasury, with revenues from taxation, from tolls levied on trade routes which crossed the land, from state commercial enterprises, and from the booty of war and subject peoples. ⁶⁵ Just as the corporate personality of the people found its embodiment in the king, so the moral foundations of the king's relationship with Yahweh must find its embodiment in the administration, welfare, and ethical structure of society. For only then could there be a sense of peace and well being שָׁלוֹם .

Thus, in a very real sense, this sacral person who stood as mediator between the people and its God, who was the

64. Ibid., p. 3.

65. Scott, op. cit., pp. 163-164.

representative of the people before God, and of God before the people, was both a viceregent of Yahweh upon earth, and a 'shield' for his people in their corporate life. And it was to those who held this distinct and special place in Israelite society that Isaiah many times was called upon to direct his words of prophecy.

CHAPTER TWO

ISAIAH AND THE DAVIDIC MONARCHY

The substance of Israelite kingship as developed in the previous chapter is necessary for a proper understanding of Isaiah's relationship to the Davidic dynasty. While the Israelite cult, centered in Jerusalem, displayed certain ideological differences from the cults of peripheral cultures, it was nevertheless the foundation of religious and political life during the period of the monarchy. The distinctiveness of Isaiah among the prophets lies in the extent to which he founded the substance of his oracles and his peculiar orientation towards things political, upon the cult, and its preserved traditions, molding these traditions always under the pressure of the political events of his time in order to bring the plan of Yahweh to bear realistically upon these events and their personalities. While the sovereignty of Yahweh is never sacrificed in Isaiah, neither is it propounded outside the context of the cultic life as Isaiah knew it. To delineate the main lines of Israel's cultic attitude toward the Davidic monarchy, and follow them through Isaiah's teaching, has been the work of a not insignificant group of scholars in recent times.¹

The heart of Isaiah's attitude toward the Davidic monarchy is to be found in chapters 7 - 11, which it will be the purpose of this chapter to examine. Here, in the

¹. Particularly Johannes Lindblom, Helmer Ringgren, Erling Hammershaimb, Sigmund Mowinckel, S. H. Hooke, Gerhard Von Rad, Magne Saebø, and Margaret Cook, all of whose works will be considered at some point below.

confrontation with Ahaz, the Immanuel sign, and the proclamations of 9: 1-6 and 11: 1-9, one may discern motifs which reflect the role of kingship in Israel as Isaiah understood and defended it. These chapters have been singled out because they form a relatively consistent block of literature, thematically, which can be considered as a final manifestation of prophetic thought. This is not to say that it represents material written or spoken all at one time, but rather material made up of oracles, liturgies and fragments derived from varying periods, collected presumably by the prophet himself or his immediate disciples, and placed in a form relevant to the religious and political issues which centered about the Syro-Ephraimitic war.

The manner in which these fragments were worked together betrays the consummate skill of the compiler, skill of a calibre which all but forces us to assign the complex to the prophet himself or an immediate disciple. Albrecht Alt,² and others³ have pointed to the way in which each prophetic oracle of doom and each historical pattern of destruction

2. Albrecht Alt, "Befreiungsnacht und Krönungstag," Kleine Schriften Zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel, Vol. 2, München, C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953, p. 207. (Henceforth abbreviated KS.)

3. Joh. Lindblom, A Study on the Immanuel Section of Isaiah, Lund, C.W.K. Gleerup, 1958, p. 39. Helmer Ringgren, The Messiah in the Old Testament, London, SCM Press, 1956, p. 22. Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament, An Introduction, trans. by, Peter R. Ackroyd, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1965, p. 319. Edward Kissane, The Book of Isaiah, Vol. 1, Dublin, Browne and Nolan LTD., 1941, p. 105.

in these chapters is precisely balanced out against a cultic proclamation or liturgy which expresses the hope of Yahweh's promises to the house of David.

In 7: 1-3 there is portrayed the conspiracy of Rezin and Pekah which dominated the international political horizon during the period of the Syro-Ephraimitic war of 735 B.C., along with the prophet's warning and Ahaz's lack of faith in refusing to ask a sign of Yahweh. The prophet then breaks in with the Immanuel sign in vv. 14-16, a sign of hope, which as will be seen later, was associated with the continuance of the Davidic line according to Yahweh's promise. In vs. 7 through 9: 1 (English versions; 8: 23 in Hebrew) there is a return to the pathos of the historical situation, broken then by 9: 2-7, the announcement of the birth of the royal child. Oracles on the historical situation continue on through chapter 10, to find their relief again in 11: 1-10, and possibly on through 16, with the promise of the continuation of the Davidic line.

Thus the cultic interpretation of Israel's kingship, stated in forms familiar to the ears of its contemporary hearers, finds restatement in the light of the current historical situation in such a way that there emerges from the complex, the intense faith of the prophet that out of Yahweh's judgment of Israel will emerge a purified remnant which will find its figurehead in the Davidic monarchy, collapsed and restored, (4: 3; 11: 1) according

to the promises of Yahweh, and the natural expectations of throne succession which characterized ancient near eastern practice.

CRITICAL PROBLEMS OF CHAPTERS 7 - 11

While the passages concerned present a number of critical problems, there is relatively little to challenge their authenticity, if not for Isaiah himself, then at least for his immediate disciples. In spite of the fact that chapter 7 is narrated in the third person while 6 and 8 find expression in the first person, scholarship feels certain of its authenticity.⁴ Considerably more question centers around 9: 2-7 and 11: 1-9, which appear to have been inserted from another period. Probably to be dismissed is Pfeiffer's view which radically separates these two portions from the general context by placing them in the period 500 - 200 B.C., and viewing the Immanuel sign in chapter 7 as a gloss connecting these passages with the Messianic expectation.⁵ Bentzen is correct in noting that the tendency to excise these seemingly messianic portions and assign them to the post-exilic period was often "...due

4. Eissfeldt, op. cit., pp. 310-311. G. W. Anderson, A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament, London, Gerald Duckworth and Company LTD., 1959, p. 108. S. R. Driver, Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, New York, Meridian Books, 1957, pp. 208-209. Otto Kaiser, Der Prophet Jesaja, Das Alte Testament Deutsch, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963, pp. 68-69.

5. Robert Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1948, pp. 438 - 440.

to the dominant idea of the pre-exilic prophets being exclusively prophets of doom." ⁶ A certain verdict is not possible, though Eissfeldt would incline the balance in favor of including 9: 2-7 and excluding 11: 1-9, which he assigns to a later date. ⁷ For the time being, however, it will be to our advantage to reserve judgment on chapter 11: 1-9, as a fuller discussion will follow later.

Some of the material in between, and particularly chapter 8, presents problems for the critic. It is generally recognized that 8 is a collection of fragments, most of them deriving from Isaiah's time, and probably collected together ultimately by the prophet or one of his immediate disciples. The chapter is generally broken down into verses 1-4, 5-8, 9-10, 11-14, and 16-9: 1. 1-4 introduces the sign Mahershalalhashbaz which, like Shearyashub, is a portent of the political conditions of the era, and most likely not as Lindblom has suggested, a metaphorical expression for the 'limmudim', the disciples of Isaiah mentioned in verse 16. ⁸ The section, verses 5-8, bears a warning which largely parallels chapter 7 and finds a resolution in 11-15 where it is seen that the success of the oppressor nations will not be complete, but that "...the name of Emmanuel is the pledge that the nations will be overthrown and that

6. Aage Bentzen, Introduction to the Old Testament, Copenhagen, G. E. C. Gad Publisher, 1961, p. 108.

7. Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 319.

8. Lindblom, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

Israel will revive." ⁹ Thus this latter message seems to carry the same message into popular circles which in chapter 7 was addressed to Ahaz, that the peril of the Syro-Ephraimitic invasion will pass away, and that security can be obtained by confidence in Yahweh without recourse to the help of Assyria. The prophecies of disaster follow when the prophetic message is not accepted.

Verses 9 - 10, in the opinion of many, are a separate oracle. Eissfeldt finds them in a later part of Isaiah's ministry than the Syro-Ephraimitic war, ¹⁰ though Lindblom would probably assign them earlier, with the idea that they do fit finally into Isaiah's thought concerning the war. ¹¹ Magne Saebø, on the basis of a lexicographical study of the opening word **רָלַן**, has suggested that these verses reflect a known usage in holy war and exhibit the form of a challenge to battle. In Isaiah they would appear to be used as a challenge to Israel's enemies in which the enemies would hear the message of God through the prophet by being reminded of the battle cries ringing forth from the far places of the earth. ¹²

Verses 16 ff. introduce the interesting evidence of the existence of a group of disciples surrounding Isaiah, and

9. Kissane, op. cit., p. 98.

10. Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 311.

11. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 32.

12. Magne Saebø, "Zur Traditionsgeschichte Von Jesaja 8: 9-10," ZAW, Vol. 76, 1964, pp. 132-144.

as Lindblom suggests, "...the fact that the prophet in this group saw an embryo of the remnant, the new Israel, that would outlive the catastrophe, make conversion to Yahweh, and form a new Israel." ¹³

In spite of the fragmentary nature of this 8th chapter, it is probably safe to say that in its final setting, as it is found here, all of the materials have to do with the period of the Syro-Ephraimitic war, despite the possible origin of those materials elsewhere, and along with Duham and Kissane, to attribute them, in their final compilation, to Isaiah. ¹⁴ The remainder of chapter 9 following verse 7, and chapter 10, is composed of scattered oracles which have a general relationship to what has previously been discussed. The oracle against Assyria, 10: 5 ff., will be more fully discussed in another chapter.

THE CONFRONTATION WITH AHAZ AND THE IMMANUEL SIGN

Isaiah's central thoughts regarding the nature and authority of the Davidic dynasty can be discerned in the historical narrative of chapter 7 in which he confronts the weakling king Ahaz and propounds to him the Immanuel sign. This narrative is of a purely historical character, and its affinities with II Kings 16 have long been recognized.

13. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 50.

14. Kissane, op. cit., p. 98.

The historical situation is the threatened assault on Judah by Ephraim and Damascus, whose hope it is to replace Ahaz with one Son of Tab'el, presumably an Aramaean ¹⁵, and to coerce Judah into becoming party to their struggle with Assyria. Ahaz, standing at the brink of the conflict, is in hopes that the coalition attempt will come to nought and that the kingdoms of the two hostile rulers will be conquered by the Assyrians. In order that the peril might be averted, he is considering the notion of allying with Assyria to hasten the latter's attack upon Pekah and Rezin and assure himself of a respectable position in the event of an Assyrian victory.

For Ahaz, the move was a natural one politically. The momentary revival of power under his father Uzziah had come to an end, and Ahaz, a weaker ruler in more perilous times, was obliged to bargain for his existence. He had become ardently pro-Assyrian for purely political reasons,

15. Sigmund Mowinckel, He That Cometh, trans. by G.W. Anderson, London, Basil Blackwell, 1959, p. 117. Erling Hammershaimb, "The Immanuel Sign," Studia Theologica, Vol. 3, Fasc. I-II, 1949, pp. 124-142, where he mentions that, "The Massoretic pronunciation of the name, with "a" in the first syllable, indicates that he was Aramaic and not Judaic (in the latter case the name would have been Tobiel). He was therefore not a quisling; there is nothing whatever in the text to imply the existence of a party friendly to the Aramaeans in Judah at that time (not even viii: 6). " This seems a safer position than the attempted link between a princess of Tobiel and King Uzziah, an explanation attempted by Albright, BASOR, 140, 1955, pp. 34-35, and upheld by W. Vogt, "Filius Tab'el," Biblica, 37, 1956, pp. 263-264, and Norman K. Gottwald, All the Kingdoms of the Earth, New York, Harper and Row, 1964, pp. 150-151.

and "...his willingness to scrap Yahwism as the state cult and to introduce Assyrian cult practices suggests that he held no strong religious convictions." ¹⁶ This stance was further encouraged by the existence of strong pro-Assyrian feelings among certain of his citizens, ¹⁷ which probably accounts for the prophet's addressing a similar message to them (ch. 8), as he earlier directed to Ahaz (ch. 7).

The situation was grim. The existence of the Davidic dynasty was at stake before the enemy attack. It was impossible to remain neutral; "he must prepare for an attack by the two kings in the North; and when the news of their advance reached Jerusalem, he took measures for putting the town in a state of defence. ¹⁸

It was here, preparing the defenses before the siege, ¹⁹ that the prophet and his young son confronted the ruler. Isaiah was no doubt aware that the king was planning to deal with the crisis in this manner, and he regarded it

16. Gottwald, op. cit., p. 150.

17. Ibid., pp. 149-150. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 30.

18. Hammershaimb, op. cit., p. 132.

19. Gottwald, op. cit., p. 155. Gottwald is right in asserting that the editorial introduction from II Kings 16: 5 accurately connects the incident with the threat of Pekah and Rezin, but gives the misleading impression that the prophet's meeting with the king occurred during the siege. Though the verbs פָּלַח and כָּבַל in their context seem to infer past tense, one is probably to understand that the siege has not begun, and Ahaz's interest in the water supply is a preparatory one in the event of siege.

wholly contrary to Yahweh's purpose for Judah.

The prophet judged the king's conduct not by political, but by religious standards. To the prophet, an appeal to Assyria for help would be proof that the king had greater faith in earthly assistance than in Yahweh. The king did not understand that what was happening was in accordance with Yahweh's purpose, and that Assyria and the other powers were merely tools in his hands. 20

Realizing that Ahaz's political measures implied a rupture of the covenantal promises of Yahweh, Isaiah prevailed upon Ahaz to give up his defensive arrangements and rely only upon Yahweh. 21

On the surface, it appears that the prophet's message was one of ironic doom. He was convinced that Judah would fall because of her apostasy. This had been revealed in his inaugural vision. "He was also convinced that the catastrophe would come through the world-power that was in sway at this time," 22 namely Assyria, so his children had been symbolically named accordingly, 'a remnant shall return', and 'spoil speeds, prey hastes.' The first of these was addressed to the king (ch. 7) and the second to the people. (ch. 8) Shearyashub, who bore the comforting message of a remnant "was to release Ahaz from his fear of the enemies and make him rely on Yahweh and Yahweh alone," 23 while Mahershalalhashbaz was

20. Hammershaimb, op. cit., p. 132.

21. Lindblom, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

22. Ibid., p. 14.

23. Ibid., p. 10.

"...to impress publically upon Judah the futility of participation in such an alliance." ²⁴ Those who asked the prophet why he had given his children such names would learn from him the message for their time. And as though that weren't enough, he called upon Ahaz to ask a sign for himself from Yahweh, but Ahaz passed off his own form of discretion as the better part of valor and refused.

One could only expect prophetic denunciation at this point, but we are surprised at the sudden and hopeful turn of the prophet's message. Far from signaling a sentence upon Ahaz, the word **יִצְחָק** ²⁵ changes the direction of the prophecy entirely. At this point, Yahweh acts through the prophet to give the king and people a sign which indicated to those who could read it what God was about to do to them and for them. ²⁶ "The prophecy to King Ahaz of the birth of a son, in this situation so critical for his dynasty, cannot therefore possibly mean anything else but an encouragement." ²⁷ It

24. Gottwald, op. cit., p. 154.

25. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 17; With Lindblom, one may say that **יִצְחָק** by itself is quite neutral, and must be considered in the context of the passage. Ahaz's obvious lack of faith in Yahweh is the occasion of Yahweh's action on Ahaz's behalf to preserve a remnant as well as the Davidic throne. See also Hammershaimb, op. cit., pp. 134-135.

26. S. H. Hooke, "The Sign of Immanuel," The Siege Perilous, London, SCM Press, pp. 230-231. E. Jenni, "Immanuel," RGK, Dritter Band, Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1959, p. 678.

27. Hammershaimb, op. cit., p. 135. Ringgren, op. cit., p. 26.

was a full blown attempt to bolster the king's faith and courage in the face of the external threat and the king's internal weakness. The queen, the wife of Ahaz, would bear a son to perpetuate the dynasty, and Ahaz would know concretely and securely that "God is with us".²⁸ On the one hand there was the historical reality of impending destruction, and on the other stood Yahweh and his promise to the Davidic dynasty; on the one hand the sign of the spoil speeding and the prey hastening, and on the other the promise of a remnant escaping, a hope for Israel, finding its fulfillment in Yahweh's promise of Israel's preservation through the continuance of the Davidic dynasty, a son for the royal throne, whose name, Immanuel, would signify that Yahweh was still with his people. "Thus Yahweh is a rock of refuge when the waters sweep through the land, but only for those who fully regard him as holy, i.e., as absolutely worthy to be trusted in. Such a rock is one to be built upon, a solid foundation." ²⁹

The prophet's message to Ahaz was a plea to realize the full content of such a faith. It wasn't merely the expression of a human hope because Yahweh was its object, and it wasn't theological ~~piety~~ ^{Pietism}, because the concrete continuation of

28. Hammershaimb, op. cit., p. 135. A. T. Olmstead, History of Palestine and Syria, New York, C. Scribners & Sons, 1931, p. 450.

29. Gottwald, op. cit., p. 157.

the Davidic dynasty was involved.³⁰

It is here that one is able to understand the prophet's stance in the context of the ancient near eastern background developed in the previous chapter. Isaiah's concept of Immanuel as the royal child becomes clearer when one realizes that Isaiah, unlike the other classical literary prophets, was connected with the royal court, and framed much of his thought accordingly. Unlike the other prophets, he stood as a bridge between classical Yahwism and the court theology and procedure of the period. Hammershaimb is correct in saying that the prophet roused the king's interest by giving the sign the form of a prediction well known to the king from the rituals of the king-cult. The external continuance of the House of David had, according to the common Oriental pattern, been a central part of the king-cult at the temple of Jerusalem.³¹

In order to understand what associations Isaiah awakened in his hearers by the prophecies in 7: 10-17, 9: 1 ff. and 11: 1 ff., we must be quite clear in our minds as to the position of the king in ancient Israel, and what ideas were

30. It seems necessary that these two sides be involved. Scholars such as Allen and Hooke, in emphasizing that the prophet's message is simply trust in Yahweh, suffer from historical vagueness, while an attempt to see the problem only historically would miss the prophetic point. It seems then, that Hammershaimb achieves an admirable balance in this matter.

31. II Samuel 7: 13. Psalm 132: 11-12.

attached to him in the mind of the prophet. It was in the last chapter that it was noted that the disintegration of the authority of tribal units, which had been characteristic of the period of the judges, brought in its wake the rise of the monarchy with a return to a practice of kingship which bore affinities to the peripheral cultures in the ancient Near East, and that one could no longer consider the monarchy an isolated Israelite phenomenon, but as something common to the Near East,³² and which took over, in many instances, elements of the previous Canaanite culture as they were mediated through the Jerusalem Jebusite tradition.

The most important and obvious borrowing with regard to the kingship was the notion that the king, participating in a divine nature through his adoptive relationship to Yahweh, stood as a link between divine power and the prosperity of the kingdom.³³ This close relationship between the king

32. Hammershaimb, op. cit., pp. 125-126. Mowinckel, op. cit., pp. 114-115. Ringgren, op. cit., p. 27. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 22. S. H. Hooke, "Myth and Ritual Reconsidered," The Siege Perilous, London, SCM Press, p. 191, also The Origins of Early Semitic Ritual, London, Oxford University Press, 1938, Schweich Lectures, 1935, p. ix.

33. Mowinckel, op. cit., p. 116. Rev. J.C. Todd, Politics and Religion in Ancient Israel, New York, The Mac Millan Company, pp. 184-185. A great deal of confusion on this issue seems to have been caused by those who feel that the acceptance of the cultic notion of kingship by Isaiah would preclude his critical stance toward both Ahaz and Hezekiah. It is the opinion of this author that the acceptance of the cultic idea of kingship becomes the foundation of the prophet's attack upon those kings who were considerably less than ideal, which accounts also for the prophetic irony Isaiah exhibits in his proclamation of the Immanuel sign. It should also be pointed out that there is a distinct difference between the idea that the Israelite king was an adopted son of God, and therefore participating in the divine nature, and the idea of the kingship of Adonai or Yahweh.

ideologies of Canaan and Israel can be seen in their respective emphases upon the importance of the birth of an heir to the throne for the continuance of the dynasty. The central matter in the Karit text is Karit's courtship and marriage to secure the continuance of the dynasty through the birth of a prince. With Pedersen and others it is quite possible to see here the myth of a primordial king, representative of a long established dynasty, which expresses the necessity for the preservation of the current dynasty through the tale of the expedition to Edom to secure a queen that the royal house might have children. Hammershaimb points to a similar motif in the Dan'il text, where the "yld" seems to have a passive form very similar to the $\tau\lambda\alpha$ of Isaiah 9: 5.³⁴ The alliance between such a royal theology, whose use in ritual ~~ass~~^{as}ured the stability and prosperity of the country, comes seriously close to the type of stress which the Israelite monarchy laid upon Yahweh's promises to David, through the prophet Nathan, that his house should remain on the throne in Jerusalem forever in order that the Jerusalem government might remain stable and prosperous. (II Samuel 8: 8-16)

This, in turn, brings into utmost importance the marriage of the king and the references to the queen and terms used to describe her. The importance of the kingly marriage as part of the continuance of the dynasty in Ugarit

³⁴. Hammershaimb, op. cit., p. 1130. Mowinkel, op. cit., p. 117.

finds close parallel in Israel in such references as Psalm 45, in which verse 6 expresses the idea that the throne will be everlasting, while the concluding verse 17 alludes to sons promised to the royal bride, who will perpetuate the dynasty.³⁵

The terms used to describe the queen and the mother of Immanuel cause grave problems for the interpreter, despite the rather obvious linguistic parallel of Isaiah's **הַלֵּמָה** and the Ugaritic " 'glmt ". Some have allowed this connection to be obscured by an over hasty desire to establish a forced connection between this term and the Christian notion of the Virgin Birth.³⁶ Particularly is this true of E.J. Young,³⁷ who undertakes a determined analysis of the texts bearing the terms **הַלֵּמָה**, 'glmt, and **παρθένος** in an attempt to prove the foregone conclusion that the usages refer always to an unmarried woman. Here he is strangely in agreement with Kissane³⁸ who states the same thing with less cryptic intent.

35. Hammershaimb, op. cit., p. 131.

36. Otto Kaiser, op. cit., p. 80, points up this difficulty. "Gegen die alte Christologische Deutung spricht, dass der ganze Zusammenhang ein bald eintretendes Ereignis erfordert, und das das hebräische Wort, 'alma, wie sein ugaritisches Äquivalent 'glmt, nicht einfach dem deutschen Wort Jungfrau entspricht, sondern eine junge Frau ohne Rücksicht auf ihren Verheiratheten oder ledigen Stand bezeichnet."

37. Edward J. Young, Studies in Isaiah, London, The Tyndale Press, 1954. The discussion of the three terms is taken up in chapters 6 & 7.

An analysis of the use of 'glmt in the Ras Shamra texts can shed valuable light upon the background of the term **הגלמ** and produce some stunning conclusions with respect to the role of the term in near eastern usage. In the "Nikkal and Yarih" text, Nikkal is referred to as both "btlt" and "'glmt" such as to make the two appear synonymous. Driver ³⁹ translates "btlt" as "virgin", with reference to Anat, and is undoubtedly correct in so doing. However the text displays a concept of virgin which requires careful defining.

In the Karit text III ii: 27-28, the term "btlt" is used in a further connection which brings out its uniquely mythological character. The text reads;

mšš d btlt ('nt)
mšnq (t 'elm)

and which Driver translates;

One that shall drain the breasts of the virgin
(Anat)
the suckling muse(s) of (the gods).

If "btlt" here can be translated "virgin", there must clearly be some alteration in the meaning of the term, and indeed the term might be better dispensed with entirely. If the translation "virgin" be retained, then "btlt" must be understood according to Mowinckel's notion that the goddess was one who bore each year and ever and again became a virgin. The term, in other words, must retain its mythological

39. G. R. Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1956, pp. 84-85.



connections with fertility.⁴⁰

Finally it is noteworthy that "'glmt" is associated not only with the term "btlt", but also with the term "a[†]t", "a married woman". Karit III ii: 22-23 reads;

a([†]t tq) h.y Krt. a[†]t
tqh (.) btk. 'glmt tš'rb

Thou shalt take a wife, O Karit, shalt take a wife to thy house (and) introduce a lass (to) thy court.

Here "a[†]t", "wife", and "'glmt", "damsel, lass" are used interchangeably and are virtually synonymous, in the same way that "btlt" and "'glmt" were synonymous in the "Nikkal and Yarih" text. Indeed, the general interchangeability of these terms must be postulated, and their use in conjunction with the queen of the royal house, as well as mythologically with reference to the goddess Anat, must not escape notice.

The implications of this are threefold. First, the term "'glmt", the parallel to ^להנלמה, can refer to a young woman married or not; second, that by its use interchangeably with "btlt" the term has definite mythological implications involving fertility; and third, the royal queen, by reference to the relationship between "btlt" and "'glmt", can be seen as a vital participant in that fertility theme which was the mythological backbone of both the nation's prosperity and the continuity of its

40. Mowinckel, op. cit., p. 114.

royal throne.⁴¹

Isaiah, then, in using the term **הַלְלָהּ** in conjunction with the sign of Immanuel, would be referring to a well known popular belief of the time regarding a supernatural woman who would bear a son, whose birth would be an omen of a great and happy transformation, a new turn of events. Borrowing heavily upon pre-Israelite cultic influences of a Canaanite type, and involving the queen squarely within the mythological perspective of the times, Isaiah displays his finesse at molding tradition to his own purposes by demonstrating that the woman, of whom ancient tradition tells, in the person of Ahaz's queen, is now to bear a son, and that the birth of this child will guarantee, as it did in ancient tradition, that "God is with us".⁴² During this dramatic episode, Isaiah becomes certain that the queen is with child, and he borrows from typical cultic terminology and patterns in announcing the royal birth, following the three point announcement pattern known from Canaanite and Egyptian backgrounds.

41. Hammershaimb, op. cit., pp. 128-129. Hammershaimb refers to instances in the Ba'al and Anat texts with parallel word usages in the Dan'il texts which show that the purpose of the goddess is that of establishing a relationship with the god, on one level, and between the king and queen on the other, to bring about fecundity in mankind. The king becomes identical with Ba'al and the queen with Anat; the offspring becomes prince of the royal house. The phrase, "Behold, the young woman gives birth to a son" in "Nikkal and Yarih" parallels the Isaiah situation.

42. Mowinckel, op. cit., p. 115.

1. The announcement of the conception.
2. The instruction concerning the child's name. ⁴³
3. The prediction of the child's mission.

She is with child and will bear a son, will call his name Immanuel, and he will be a symbol of the fact that though Yahweh will bring upon them days such as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah, nonetheless 'God is with us'. Yahweh intends the royal child to be a token that his promise to the Davidic household stands secure, that the coalition between Pekah and Rezin will come to nothing, and that all the good fortune and salvation which, in accordance with the covenant, is associated with the birth of the prince will again be realized. What is predicted is not a Messiah in the later sense, nor does the concept of Immanuel belong to eschatology proper, ⁴⁴ but a prince, who according to ancient near eastern mythology would be a connecting link between Yahweh and his people, a channel of blessing as had been the promise connected with David, an Immanuel.

It would seem that only such a concrete message of hope could account for the rather obvious connection later established between Immanuel and the 'royal child' of

⁴³. Ringgren, op. cit., p. 27. Lindblom, op. cit., pp. 20-22. Lindblom's opposition to the idea that the announcement is cultic is somewhat ambiguously stated, and does not match his later admission that the name 'Immanuel' is not one of common Hebrew stock, but has clear cultic tones.

⁴⁴. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 56.

chapter 9, and the shoot from the stump of Jesse in chapter 11,⁴⁵ both of which emerge, as we shall see later, as cult liturgies, embodying the traditional hope with which Israel greeted each ascendant to the Davidic throne. It is instructive here to note that Gottwald, who views Immanuel as the prophet's son, is forced to deny the validity of chapters 9 and 11, and to cut the passage short with chapter 8, thus turning Isaiah into a prophet of doom.⁴⁶

However, as we have noted earlier, a message of doom in the midst of a situation which already exhibited a terrifying historical development and a weakling king would only be a reiteration of the self evident. The ministry of Isaiah in the midst of this imperiled situation is far more complex and integral. His is a ministry of reality on the one hand; faith, assurance, and healing on the other. He realized that the cornerstone of the nation was the Davidic king, who was the recipient of the promises of Yahweh, not by virtue of his own person, but in accordance with the promises to the House of David. While the individual king could sin and be punished by Yahweh, the promises to the dynasty held good, so that Yahweh would not let it be destroyed.⁴⁷ With this concept, Isaiah played a role as

⁴⁵. Hammershaimb, op. cit., p. 124. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 34.

⁴⁶. Norman K. Gottwald, "Immanuel as the Prophet's Son," VT, Vol. 8, 1958, p. 36.

⁴⁷. Hammershaimb, op. cit., pp. 135-136.

mediator between religion and politics, drinking deeply of an understanding and appreciation of the issues on both sides, and finding their meeting point, precisely in Yahweh's promises to David, that his line would be carried on as the focal point of Israel's success and prosperity forever.

How this was to be accomplished, and the factors which surrounded it, are to be found in the nature of Immanuel himself, whose name was as richly laden with Israelite tradition as it was with Canaanite background.

In order to understand the nature of the sign it is also important to bear in mind that the child's name 'God is with us' is well known from the temple-cult, where it has formed a liturgical creed at the New Year Feast. It occurs twice in Psalm 46 (v.8 and v. 18) as a ritual cry, of which we have an echo in many passages in the Old Testament (see Micah iii: 11f; Zeph. iii:15, Num. xxiii:21; Amos v:14 etc.). When Ahaz hears Isaiah speak the familiar words, the thought must of necessity have come to him that he could trust in Yahweh, who would save his people, 48 in this case, of course, the kingdom of Judah.

There is nothing, therefore, strange in the dichotomy of Isaiah's message with its hope on one hand and doom on the other. He sees that destruction of Judah is imminent but that Yahweh's promise of the preservation of the Davidic line is as sure as was his promise to Abraham, that from a small, relatively infertile family, would come an entire nation! True, an individual ruler could be punished with destruction, but the promise to the dynasty remained good.

The nature of the royal child is further brought out in the reference in verse 15 to the fact that the child

shall eat curds and honey, or butter and honey, products which, in spite of a landslide of academic opinions to the contrary, probably connoted prosperity.⁴⁹ Other Old Testament references incline in that direction⁵⁰ and scholarly mention is made of mythological references which identify it with the food of the gods in Babylonian thinking, or "...the powerful divine food of the wilderness, which can keep even deserted children alive."⁵¹ Considering Isaiah's central aim in prophesying the child's arrival, there seems little reason to adopt the common exegetical view, that adopted by Hooke, that it is the food of devastation and affliction.⁵²

The royal nature of the child also finds support in the close relation between the words used in the announcement of the child's birth in chapters 7:14 and 9:5 and the corresponding situation at Ugarit. "Immanuel", "with us is God", was a familiar ejaculation in the liturgies of the sanctuary. With this cry, the woman would greet the birth of her child, expressing her certainty of the truth which it conveyed; in that age, the first exclamation after the

49. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 24. Jenni, op. cit., p. 678.

50. Exodus 3:8; 3:17; 13:5; 33:3; Lev. 20:24; Num. 13:27; 14:8; 16:14; Deut. 6:3; 11:9; 26:9; 26:15; 27:3; 31:20; Josh. 5:6; Jer. 11:5; 32:22; Ezek. 20: 6; 20:15. Practically all of these references to "milk and honey" refer explicitly to a desirable or prosperous state of existence.

51. Mowinckel, op. cit., pp. 112-113.

52. S. H. Hooke, "The Sign of Immanuel," op. cit., pp. 229-230.

birth of a child was regarded as an omen of its destiny and character. With this ejaculation, the congregation would greet the advent and presence of the deity at the festival, as may be inferred from the refrain of the epiphany and New Year psalm (Ps. 46).⁵³ The announcement also finds close parallel in the "Nikkal and Yarih" text from Ugarit, where it is exclaimed, "Lo, a lass shall bear a son,"⁵⁴ while the liturgical announcement in 9:5 would seem to parallel the joyful reception of a royal child at Ugarit, as seen in the Karit legend.

To see the child as a royal child, born to the wife of Ahaz, for the perpetuation of the Davidic dynasty, then, allows one to retain a connection between the Immanuel prophecy and the two chapters 9 and 11, a connection which seems necessary to the integrity of the prophet or the compiler who stood close to the events of the Syro-Ephraimitic coalition. That Yahweh would not disown the Davidic royal house becomes apparent when we read on in chapters 9 and 11 and see how the darkness portrayed in chapters 8 and 10 gives way to light; the enemy's yoke is broken (a pattern which will be seen later in chapter 4) and a child is born in the royal house who will ascend the throne of David, possessed of all the qualities of the ideal ruler.⁵⁵ With

53. Mowinckel, op. cit., pp. 111-112.

54. G. R. Driver, op. cit., p. 125.

55. Hammershaimb, op. cit., p. 140.

a new king, a new age would be inaugurated, an age of renewed hopes and expectations. The king's might, wisdom, justice, eternity, and divinity, were, as we now know, common features of the king-ideology. The promises uttered in chapters 9 and 11 are therefore in keeping with the Immanuel prophecy. To see how this is true, a fuller discussion of these two chapters must be undertaken.

THE ROLE OF CHAPTERS 9: 1-6 (2-7) AND 11: 1-9

To connect the Immanuel sign with the birth of the royal child in chapter 9 and the motif of the continuity of the Davidic throne in chapter 11, is not to suggest that chapters 9: 1-6 and 11: 1-9 are of the same literary character or genera as chapters 7 and 8, or that they originated within the same historic milieu. These two passages are distinct entities. Von Rad is undoubtedly correct in saying that Isaiah 9 is a difficult passage to assess from the point of view of form criticism. "There is no divine pronouncement here, for every indication of such a pronouncement is lacking, and there seems therefore to be no communication whatever by Yahweh in direct speech. Thus it cannot be held that the section contains any pronouncement which Yahweh has charged the prophet to publish."⁵⁶ Chapter 11: 1-9 seems as well to be of a character rather separate from the oracles which surround it.

⁵⁶. Gerhard Von Rad, "The Royal Ritual in Judah," The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, trans. by E. W. Trueman Dicken, Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1966, pp. 229-230.

Chapter 9: 1-6, though placed here by Isaiah or one of his disciples, seems to have its origin within another historic setting. A good deal of scholarly ink has flowed in an attempt to assign that setting with some precision, though the end of that debate is not yet in sight. One of the most penetrating studies of the subject has come from Albrecht Alt.⁵⁷ Alt's position is that the passage is first of all of genuine Isaianic origin. Its setting is after the conquering of the North Israelite territories in 734 by Tiglath-pileser III, and probably was composed after 732, and deals with the enthronization of an expected new Davidide. The poem itself forms a herald's proclamation to these people, who are walking in darkness, that with this new Davidide, the night which will see their freedom proclaimed, is approaching. Such an identification could presumably find concrete realization in Hezekiah, during whose reign the plague swept through the Assyrian army, and they fled back to their own country, leaving behind them all their 'goods and chattles'. Alt maintains that the 'child born to us' does not refer to the physical birth of a royal child, but to the act of adoption on the part of Yahweh, through which a successor on the Davidic throne in Jerusalem became legitimate king; in this view he is followed by Von Rad, who draws a parallel in the seeming adoption formula in Psalm 2:7.⁵⁸

57. Alt, op. cit., pp. 206-225.

58. Von Rad, op. cit., p. 230. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 35.

The difficulties with this view seem to be threefold. First, in order to preserve the real unity of 9: 1-6 with the preceding chapters, it would seem advisable to have them come from Isaiah at a time closer to the confrontation with Ahaz, which was really before the Assyrian onslaught started, rather than after the siege against Hezekiah had ended. Second, if the passage originated in accordance with the plague in the Assyrian army, then it is difficult to know who the 'new Davidide' is who is undergoing adoption by Yahweh as the king who is procuring the night of freedom. Hezekiah seems the only candidate, and he is already king, and presumably already crowned and enthroned. And third, to consider the use of 𐤕𐤕𐤕 as signifying a king born earlier and adopted a son of Yahweh later, seems to force the use of the word, and does not conform to the use of this form in the Dan'il texts, as pointed out previously.

It would seem advisable then to assign the actual use of the passage to the immediate situation of the Syro-Ephraimitic war. Whether or not it was uttered during the confrontation is debatable, but at least in compiling it later, Isaiah was concerned to place it in that context. And as Lindblom has pointed out, this is about the only way in which the obvious and inherent unity of the whole section 7-11 can be preserved.⁵⁹

59. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 34.

The unity of the passage, the identification of Immanuel with the child in chapter 9, and the paralleling of its literal use in the Dan'il text, would all seem to argue for the idea that what is born here is, in fact, a royal child, a Davidide, born to preserve the Davidic dynasty in spite of the peril setting up around the Syro-Ephraimitic coalition and the accompanying Assyrian onslaught. For here we are concerned with the announcement of the birth of a son and the proclamation of his coronation name, according to the adoption formula noted in Psalm 2: 7.⁶⁰

Isaiah knew that the Judaeian kingdom in its present form was going to perish; but a remnant of the people would survive in Zion, a germ of a new people, under the scepter of an ideal king of the Davidic dynasty.⁶¹

This new prince is the hope for a new era in Israelite history, as is born out by the names which he is given, "Wonderful counselor, mighty god, everlasting father, prince of peace." Of his throne there will be no end, and it will be characterized throughout by justice and righteousness. With this happy shout of thanksgiving the aspects of the royal child's birth and enthronization coincide.⁶²

Though it is a good deal more difficult to assign to the present context, chapter 11: 1-9 is undoubtedly inserted here by Isaiah as a continuation of the same line of hope

60. Von Rad., op. cit., pp. 230-231.

61. Lindblom, op. cit., p. 38.

62. Ibid., p. 37.

which he has been building up in chapter 9. A number of scholars have assigned the passage to the post-exilic period,⁶³ while others assign its use to Isaiah and question its origin,⁶⁴ and still others seem to have difficulty with verse 9, which they feel belongs to another context.⁶⁵ Whatever its origin, its main theme follows neatly upon the rest of the passage and preserves its essential unity, and the probability is as high that it is of earlier origin as that it is of later.

The idea that the spiritual and material prosperity of the people is linked to the continuation of the Davidic dynasty is considerably strengthened by the reference to the stump of Jesse 11: 1, and the type of prosperity and peace ~~envisioned~~ ^{envisaged} is laid out poetically in terms which conform in every way to the near eastern concept of kingship, though it is important to note that the spiritual motif has been greatly strengthened, and while the realization of this messianic hope seems to be expected here on earth, the religious ideal here seems to prevail over the political.⁶⁶ Certainly the idea of a sacral kingship is deeply entrenched here, providing

63. Pfeiffer, op. cit., pp. 438-439. Eissfeldt, op. cit., pp. 318-319. T. K. Cheyne, Introduction to the Book of Isaiah, London, Adam and Charles Black, 1895, p. 63.

64. Ringgren, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

65. KIssane, op. cit., p. 144.

66. Ringgren, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

both a vivid presentation of the ideals connected with the Davidic royal house as well as an implied contrast with the present rulers of Judah.⁶⁷

It is quite clear that these two passages 9:1-6 and 11:1-9 fit solidly into Isaiah's message concerning the Syro-Ephraimitic coalition. However, the actual origin of the passages has been left undiscussed. If they were used by Isaiah himself, or even by his immediate disciples, the chances are strong that their origin was earlier rather than later than the prophet himself.

In an article published in 1949, Margaret Cook⁶⁸ suggested that the historic and cultic order of the two chapters was probably the reverse of that in which they now stand in the book of Isaiah, that 11:1-9 was a coronation liturgy and 9:1-6 a liturgy of enthronement, and that the two fit into the events described in II Kings 11, the death of Athaliah and the enthronement of Jehoash of Judah, in approximately the year 837 B.C., thus dating their origin about one hundred years earlier than the oracles of Isaiah among which they later found the place described above. Further, these liturgies were probably the work of a priest, which could explain Isaiah's access to them, that they were composed of disparate paragraphs paralleling successive

67. Kissane, op. cit., p. 142.

68. Margaret B. Cook, "A Suggested Occasion for Isaiah 9: 2-7 and 11: 1-9," JBL, Vol. 68, 1949, pp. 213-224.

stages of the ritual of coronation and enthronement, and that they received such unity as they possess from the nature of the occasion and the religious characteristics of the 9th century B.C. setting.

After the execution of Athaliah ~~and her pagan cult~~ in II Kings 11, a procession is formed to take the new king from the temple to the palace to set him upon the throne. The one in charge is neither prophet nor king, but the priest Jehoiada, a leader in a position to accompany deeds with words, ceremony with liturgy. It would seem that Miss Cook has to strain the point somewhat to suggest that the "cloak rolled in blood" and the "boot of the trampling warrior" are references to the cloak and shoes of Athaliah, though certainly the general imagery of violence is present here. Now that the offending rule is laid low, the Lord will multiply joy for the nation that he formerly distressed. The offense of the people has been wiped out and the deliverance of the people gained. However an even more important consideration, which seems to have been neglected by Miss Cook, is that the Davidic dynasty, temporarily interrupted by Athaliah, who was a daughter of the rival ruling dynasty in the North (II Kings 8: 26), has been restored, a necessity for the preservation of the royal theology.

While Miss Cook's argument has undoubtedly not closed the debate regarding the origin of these two portions of Isaiah's prophecy, she has probably described with accuracy

the type of situation in which these liturgies would have been used, and the fact that their use was involved with the monarchical history of Judah well before the time of Isaiah. Presumably they were used over and over again after that for coronation and enthronement occasions, to bring back the memory of that particular restoration of the Davidic monarchy, and to reinforce popular trust in the continuance of that institution. This background made them perfect material for the later use of Isaiah, a temple official and confidant of Judaeen kings, in his attempt to meet a weak king in a perilous situation, and inspire him with a message of Yahweh's preservation of the Davidic dynasty.

CHAPTER THREE

ISAIAH AND DOMESTIC POLICY

The fact that Isaiah was probably not a political office holder, in charge of specific functions of state, is reflected in the fact that nowhere in his book is his attitude toward domestic issues and public policy to be found in the form of conceptualized governmental programs. However in his advisory position to the Judaeen kings and in his prophetic oracles, one can discern clearly the fact that he was a leading social thinker and critic, a prophet of immense acumen and social insight. Encased in his sometimes violent rubrics and emerging from his disgust over the breakdown of the social ethic of his day, one can perceive the skeletal features of a grand concept which he believed to be the necessary foundation of social integration and solidarity, and hence the fountainhead of all realistic social ethics. The delineation of this concept may be said to define, in substance, Isaiah's domestic policy.

On the surface, Isaiah appears concerned only with the breakdown of social ethics which he apparently saw all about him. Despite the period of prosperity which ~~elimaxed~~ ^{reached a climax} in the death of Uzziah (742), the prophet detects in the very fabric of prosperity itself, that which will make for its undoing.

The king is astute, the priests are proud, and the market place is busy. Placid, happy, even gay, the people pursue their work and worship in their own way, and life is fair. Then again appears a prophet, hurling bitter words from the depth of a divine anguish. People buy, sell, celebrate, rejoice, but Isaiah is consumed with distress. He cannot bear the sight of a people's normal crimes: exploitation

of the poor, worship of the gods. He, like the prophets before him, has a message of doom and a bitter look.¹ Even things that are pretty are sickening to him.

In order to understand the depth of this "divine anguish" it is necessary, however, to realize that to Isaiah, the breakdown of the social ethic was only a symptom of the breaking down of the complex social structure of Judah which had been inherited for religious and political reasons out of its past, and this in turn was a symptom of a fundamental breakdown of the relationship between Yahweh and his people. The sickness which Isaiah felt was no mere disgust over the rising incidence of law breaking, but a sickness occasioned by the disillusioning realization that the structural foundations of legality were rapidly disintegrating, and that the ultimate authority cementing together those structural foundations was being ignored and denied. Here was a social disease which would one day cause his people to waste away to death, and Isaiah felt it with mortal pathos.

What sort of structure was this that was crumbling? To understand this one must understand the prophet's inherited tradition and the way he used it. Isaiah saw the history of his own time in much different colors than does the modern historian. Rather than being concerned with the chronological sequence of events, he was concerned with the working out of Yahweh's purposes and the inherited social

1. Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets, New York, Harper and Row, 1962, pp. 77-78.

and political traditions of his people in the warp and woof of events. Von Rad rightly remarks,

Perhaps his prophetic view of it would come out more clearly if we did what we actually can do and presented his preaching not in its chronological sequence, but according to its roots in tradition. It can be shown, of course, that wide-ranging and comprehensive as his message is, it rests on a quite small number of religious concepts, all of them furnished him by tradition. 2

He was the proclaimer of beliefs which were already extant and for the most part, fully developed, despite the apparent freedom with which he handled these ancient ideas and applied them to particular situations and groups of people. 3

The nature of this tradition and how it affected Isaiah's ideas have been the subject of much debate, as noted in the previous chapter. It has long been recognized that Isaiah differs from the other classical pre-exilic prophets, both in certain items of the content of his message and in the traditions upon which he seems to base his remarks. Conspicuous is his lack of dependence upon the exodus motif. "The other prophets refer to the Exodus repeatedly whether as a standpoint for their warnings or as a basis of their prophecy of salvation, but Isaiah does not.

2. Gerhard Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol. 2, Edinburgh and London, Oliver and Boyd, 1965, p. 149.
(Henceforth referred to as "OT Theo.")

3. Gerhard Von Rad, "The City on the Hill," The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays, trans. Rev. E. W. Trueman Dicken, Edinburgh and London, Oliver and Boyd, 1966, p. 232.
(Henceforth referred to as "The City".) R. E. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant, London, SCM Press LTD., 1965, pp. 52-53.

The only passage which can be construed in this manner is Isa. 10: 24-26, but its authenticity is very uncertain." ⁴ It is not that history does not play an important part in his prophecies, as Vriezen asserts, ⁵ but that he draws upon a different set of traditions than the other prophets. Many of these traditions have been finely delineated by modern scholarship. ⁶

Isaiah is basically concerned with two traditions, both of which center in Jerusalem, the Zion tradition, and the tradition of the Davidic dynasty.

4. Th. C. Vriezen, "Essentials of the Theology of Isaiah," Bernhard W. Anderson and Walter Harrelson, eds., Israel's Prophetic Heritage, London, SCM Press LTD., 1962, p. 128. However Eissfeldt and Pfeiffer seem to retain the material without further comment. Otto Eissfeldt, The Old Testament, An Introduction, trans., Peter R. Ackroyd, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1965, p. 312, and Robert Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, New York, Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1948, p. 439.

5. Vriezen, op. cit., p. 129.

6. S. Yeivin, "Social, Religious, and Cultural Trends in Jerusalem Under the Davidic Dynasty," VT, Vol. 3, 1953, pp. 149-166. Represents an attempt to trace the court, priestly, and prophetic traditions back to Canaanite backgrounds by way of the Jerusalem traditions, showing how they were transformed into Israelite institutions. H. J. Kraus, Psalmen I, Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament, Neukirchen Kreis Moers, Neukirchener Verlag Der Buchhandlung Des Erziehungsvereins, 1960; espec., Exkurs 4, "Die Kult-traditionen Jerusalems," pp. 197-201, and Exkurs 5, "Die Verherrlichung Der Gottesstadt," pp. 342-345. p. 344, and pp. 197-198; who mentions that the old Canaanite cult traditions became the basis not only for much psalm material, but for the Isaianic oracles as well.

Both are election traditions: that is to say, they were adopted by court circles in Jerusalem as the basis of their own legitimation before Jahweh. These men founded their whole existence before Jahweh, their faith and their confidence upon the God-given institutions of which these traditions were the guarantee. Isaiah was also at home in these traditions. ⁷

In Zion, Isaiah saw "...the strong and beautiful city, the divine and human inhabitants, the well ordered government... the citizen's own greater self, and the hope for the future," ⁸ while in the Davidic tradition he saw, in the adopted son and servant of Yahweh, the instrumentation of Yahweh's ordering of society and future leadership of Israel by Yahweh's anointed one. ⁹ It was, therefore, the amalgamation of these two traditions upon which Isaiah based his grand concept of the well ordered society, and it was in the threatened dissolution of them that he posited the cause of social disintegration in his day. These traditions, the basis of his domestic policy, demand further elaboration.

THE ZION TRADITION

The Zion tradition distinguishes Isaiah in a pronounced manner from the other pre-exilic prophets. While Amos made some use of the Zion-David complex, "Isaiah shows himself to be especially the prophet of Mount Zion, and although he

7. Von Rad, "OT Theo.," op. cit., pp. 174-175.

8. The Rev. J. C. Todd, Politics and Religion In Ancient Israel, New York, Mac Millan Company, pp. 13 and 176.

9. Von Rad, "OT Theo.," op. cit., pp. 174-175.

could use this election tradition as a motive to establish the people's unfaithfulness, he saw in Yahweh's presence in Jerusalem the hope for the future of Israel and all nations." ¹⁰ Both of these motifs, the presence of Yahweh and the unfaithfulness of the people, are present in Isaiah's use of the tradition and one had best not be played off at the expense of the other. The Zion tradition functioned as the symbol of the presence of Yahweh among his people and to that extent acted as a guide for ethical policy and an upholder and fortifier of social integration and solidarity.

Present day scholarship has made a rewarding effort to trace the roots of the Zion tradition to the cultic forms of pre-Israelite Jerusalem through the analysis of the Zion motif in other Old Testament references, notably the so-called 'Zion Psalms', elements of which can be assigned to an early date. ¹¹ Because of its relatively late incorporation into the cultic sphere of Yahwism, Jerusalem had lived, for a considerable time, a life of its own with respect to tradition. ¹² It had remained a Jebusite city until taken by

10. Clements, op. cit., p. 49.

11. John Hayes, "The Tradition of Zion's Inviolability," JBL, 1963, Vol. 82, p. 424. Kemper Fullerton, "Viewpoints in the Discussion of Isaiah's Hopes for the Future," JBL, Vol. 41, 1922, pp. 1-101. Mentions that the archaeological school of Gunkel, Gressmann, and Sellin first denied that the inviolability of Zion was a post exilic concept and showed in fact that it was pre-prophetic. Kraus, op. cit., pp. 342-345.

12. Von Rad, "OT Theo.", op. cit., p. 156. Hayes, op. cit., p. 419.

David after he had reigned for more than seven years in Hebron, and after its capture, it remained a royal city and was, for all practical purposes, outside the amphictyonic tribal tradition. Hence its backgrounds were Canaanite, as Ezekiel pointedly demonstrated (Chap. 16), and its allegiance was royal. ¹³

In earlier days the city had worshipped one אל יליז,
the chief deity of the Jebusites, and thereby bestowed upon its later conquerors a number of notable features, among them,

...belief in Mount Zion as a divine dwelling-place, and its identification with the sacral Mount Zaphon. The sacral association of the mountain was very closely concerned with the divine ownership of the surrounding territory. By adopting the belief that Mount Zion was a divine dwelling-place, and by remoulding this in a Yahwistic form to claim that Mount Zion had been chosen by Yahweh for his abode, David was making use of a religio-political doctrine which asserted administrative rights over Jerusalem, and which provided a religious authority for the Israelite state. ¹⁴

13. Kraus, op. cit., pp. 342-343. "Ps. 46 enthält in auffallender Weise Vorstellungen und Schilderungen, die nach allen topographischen und geographischen Gegebenheiten ursprünglich nicht zu Jerusalem gehören, sondern erst sekundär auf die heilige Gottesstadt übertragen worden sind. HGunkel deutete diese fremden Elemente "eschatologische", doch hat es sich immer deutlicher gezeigt, dass hier mit uralten Kulttraditionen gerechnet werden muss, die grösstenteils schon in vorisraelitischer Zeit im syrisch-kanaanäischen Raume eine im einzelnen kaum noch durchschaubare "Überlieferungsgeschichte" erlebten." Kraus draws attention to Psalm 48:3 in which the phrase הַר-צִיּוֹן יֵרֵכֶת צִפּוֹן apparently identifies the Israelite holy mountain with the Canaanite mountain of the gods, called Zaphon, or "North" in the Ras Shamra texts. That Isaiah used the same tradition, molding it to his own ends, can be seen by his borrowing of it in 14: 13-14.

14. Clements, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

With this ideology it was possible for the king to act as the mediator of social justice and the human focal-point of social integration and solidarity.

The structure of this tradition, as it emerges from its Canaanite-Jebusite backgrounds, has been described by Von Rad as being based upon a non-historically determinable series of events centering about the myth of a holy mountain.¹⁵ These events were three:

- (1) A thunderous throng of nations dashes against Zion.
- (2) Yahweh rebukes them.
- (3) Thereupon they flee away.

This picture, which seems to conform to the general near eastern myth of the struggle with the chaos dragon and the subsequent miraculous victory, emerges clearly in Psalm 46, where;

...though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea,
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

and ;

The nations rage, the kingdoms totter,
yet Yahweh;

Utters his voice, the earth melts.

therefore;

...the holy habitation of the Most High. (God (אֱלֹהִים) is in the midst of her,
she shall not be moved.

(עליון)

15. Von Rad, "OT Theo.", op. cit., p. 156.

The same theme is reiterated in Psalm 76;

In Judah God is known,
His name is great in Israel.
His abode has been established in Zion.
There he broke the flashing arrows,
the shield, the sword, and the
weapons of war.

We may agree with Hayes that upon consideration of the Zion Psalms, it may be safely assumed that pre-Israelite material has been interwoven with the tenets of the Yahweh faith regarding Zion. These hymns could well have been part of a Jebusite cult which borrowed elements, in turn, from a common Ugaritic-Canaanite background that viewed the gods as dwelling upon some mythically conceived, divinely protected mountain.¹⁶ Presumably the motif of Yahweh's presence was reinforced in Israelite times by the bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem and its later incorporation into the temple of Solomon. It may well also be that this act functioned to tie certain elements of the earlier Israelite legal tradition to the royal theology, transporting them over from their amphictyonic milieu.

The special elements of this Zion tradition are characteristic also of the preaching of Isaiah, as can be seen by his numerous references to it,¹⁷ which, like

16. Hayes, op. cit., p. 424. Kraus, op. cit., pp. 343-344.

17. 1:27; 2:3; 4:3; 10:24; 14:32; 28:16; 30:19; 31:9; 33:5, 14, 20; 35: 10. Also בנות ציון, 3:16, 17; 4:4. בית ציון, 1:8; 10:32; 16:1; 37:22. הר ציון, 4:5; 8:18; 10:12; 18:7; 29:8; 31:4; 37:32. References from G. Lisowsky, Konkordanz Zum Hebräischen Alten Testament, Stuttgart, Privileg. Württ. Bibelanstalt, 1958.

the Psalm elements, seem to be borrowed from this pan-oriental mythology,¹⁸ though it may perhaps be doubted that this motif was first associated with the Davidic covenant tradition by Isaiah himself, as Von Rad has argued.¹⁹ In Isaiah the relation between God and people is concentrated in the name Zion. "Of the twenty nine times the name is used in the first thirty-nine chapters of the book, eleven are from the prophet himself. Zion is the place which Yahweh founded (14: 32), where he dwells (8:18; 31:9), and where he reveals himself (2:3; cf. 6:1; 28:16)."²⁰ Furthermore, as Yahweh's cultic dwelling-place and the seat of the new people, it will withstand all the tempests of history and in the age to come will be wonderfully protected by Yahweh, and cultic assemblies will continue to celebrate holy ceremonies.²¹ So exclusively is this notion pursued that one cannot help asking whether Isaiah was even aware of the covenantal theology which finds its classical formulation in the source documents of the Hexateuch.²² Certainly in Yahweh's founding of Zion lay the cultic basis of religion, legality and ethics as these were conceived in the royal theology.

18. Von Rad, "The City", op. cit., p. 233.

19. Ibid.

20. Vriezen, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

21. Johannes Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel, Philadelphia, Muhlenberg Press, 1962, p. 356.

22. Von Rad, "The City", op. cit., pp. 232-233.

Isaiah's significance lay in the fact that he adopted this Zion tradition, which centered around Yahweh's choice of Jerusalem as his dwelling place, and broadened it to function as the foundation of his social and political theory. By so doing he became the only prophet truthfully to recognize the value of the city, to affirm its existence, and to see within its urban structures the possibility of the rulership of Yahweh.

The revelation of the Divine in that day was in the growing city life, and it is Isaiah's crowning praise that he saw it....In the same way his appreciation of cultus was not a falling back into error, it was a perception of the important place the shrine played in the city life....He saw instinctively, and in spite of prophetic prepossessions, the value of the inhabitants coming together before Yahweh their god. ²³

Isaiah breathed a living spirit into the growing organism of the city of Jerusalem, making her conscious of her destiny to be the 'holy city', the place chosen by the divine power in which to set forth righteousness, purity, and truth. In pursuit of this ideal, Isaiah delineated four themes relating the concept of Zion to the domestic life of her people.

First, Zion was the symbol of Yahweh's presence to Israel, because it was Zion which he had founded and where he chose to dwell. ²⁴ This presence was symbolized by the

23. Todd, op. cit., p. 186.

24. Kraus, op. cit., p. 199. Points to Canaanite tradition in which the holy city, where the high god dwells, is thought to be the center of the world where the god is among his people. That Jerusalem was connected with this tradition, Kraus substantiates by pointing to epithets used to describe God in the Psalms ^{אל עליון אדון כל הארץ, מלך, שופט} and shows how they originated in the Canaanite fertility cult.

temple, the dwelling place which incorporated pre-Israelite traditional thought regarding Yahweh's protection of Jerusalem, and by the ark, which incorporated the historical presence of Yahweh with his people Israel. Zion was the whole basis of religious justification, because Yahweh had founded it and there made his promise to David regarding his dynasty.

The Lord has founded Zion,
and in her the afflicted of his
people find refuge. 14:32

It was the city toward which he, as Yahweh's prophet, was obliged to direct his message.

Behold, I and the children whom the Lord
has given me are signs and portents
in Israel from the Lord of Hosts, who
dwells on Mount Zion. 8:18

It was the place on which and from which Yahweh carried out his work (10:12; 2:2-3) and upon which he acted as the protector of his people. (31:9) Isaiah's whole prophetic work centered upon the holy city of Zion, the chosen city of Yahweh.

Over and above all the threats and denunciations uttered by Isaiah rises the more powerful certainty of God's lasting, indestructible attachment to his people and to Zion. His disengagement from Israel is inconceivable. Anger passes; his attachment will never pass. Prophetic messages of doom are ambivalent. He is smiting and healing (19:22). Prophecy always moves in a polarity, yet the tension of yes and no, of anger and love, of doom and redemption, is often dissolved in the certainty of God's eternal attachment. 25

Secondly, because Zion was Yahweh's dwelling place, it was also the focus of Israel's social integration, the force which held all of Israel's social life together as an organic functioning unit. Apart from Yahweh's presence, society would disintegrate into mutual suspicion, distrust, disrespect and warring factions. Professor Porteous points succinctly to the probable roots of this motif when he mentions that "it is not inconceivable that the Hebrew conception of **PTV**, so prominent in the prophetic oracles, bears some relation to the pre-Israelite cult of El Elyon in Jerusalem, a deity who, as A. R. Johnson suggests, was probably regarded as a personification of **PTV**. If this were so, there would be a special significance in the fact that Isaiah speaks of Jerusalem as the city in which righteousness once lodged and which may once again become the city of righteousness." ²⁶

That Isaiah held firmly to Yahweh's presence as the force for the preservation of social integration and righteousness is evident from his lengthy description in chapter 3 of what transpires when Yahweh's control is withdrawn. ²⁷ When

26. N. W. Porteous, "The Basis of the Ethical Teaching of the Prophets," Studies in Old Testament Prophecy, Essays presented to T.H. Robinson, Edinburgh, T.&T. Clark, 1950, p. 155.

27. Kissane calls ch. 2:22-3:15 a unit. R.B.Y. Scott chooses to call 3:1-15 the basic unit while John Bright adds verse 16. Edward Kissane, The Book of Isaiah, Dublin, Browne and Nolan, LTD., 1941, p. 33. R.B.Y. Scott, "Isaiah, Introduction and Exegesis," Interpreter's Bible, New York, Abingdon Press, 1956, Vol. 5, p. 187. John Bright, "Isaiah I", Peake's Commentary on the Bible, eds., Matthew Black & H.H. Rowley, London, Thomas Nelson and Sons LTD., 1962, p. 492.

Yahweh takes away from Jerusalem and Judah stay (מִשְׁעָר) and staff (מִשְׁעֶנֶה) there begins a chain reaction which breaks down the entire social structure. There first disappears all the legitimate functionaries whose work keeps society functioning properly, the mighty man (גִּבּוֹר) and man of war, the judge (שׁוֹפֵט) integral to the legal process, the prophet (נְבִיא) to whom the nation looks for divine counsel, the diviner (קֶסֶם) who provides oracles, and finally the elder (זָקֵן), upon whose dignity and wisdom society rests. With the leaders then disappear the subordinates, the captains of fifty, the man of rank, the counsellors and even such low functionaries as the charmer and enchanter.

Once the social structure is gone, anarchy becomes complete. Boys and children with no skill or background become rulers, people oppress one another opportunistically, the youth is insolent toward the elder and every sort of base fellow is hailed as honorable. In society's fitful struggle to rediscover its roots and reachieve integration, people lash out in all directions. A man takes ahold of his brother and attempts to make him leader over a heap of ruins, but even he refuses, so futile is the task. Jerusalem falls because of her separation from Yahweh. Restoration can come only when Yahweh resumes his place as judge. (3: 13-15) Parallel to this picture of disintegration, the prophet or a later collector has inserted a section (3:16 - 4:1) of

uncertain date ²⁸ in which there is portrayed the vanity of the daughters of Zion whose every finery is haughty and characteristic of self conceit and who in the end will have all of it exchanged for rottenness and shame in the judgment of Yahweh.

From this picture, one is able to deduce in reverse Isaiah's grand concept, that the social integration and solidarity of Jerusalem and Judah was vitally dependent upon the presence of Yahweh in Zion. "Israel not as a mob but as an organized orderly city is the thought of the prophet," ²⁹ and Yahweh's controlling presence insured that order. Indeed, the real thrust of Isaiah's ethical message was predicated upon his ability to reverse that concept, and throw into relief the picture of the present situation.

How the faithful city has become a harlot,
she that was full of justice! (1:21)

Thirdly, because Zion was the focus of social integration she was also the source of law and morality, not only for Jerusalem and Judah, but for the entire world, insofar as Israel's mission was the propagation of Yahweh's law among the nations. It is the prophet's thought that everyone in Jerusalem is to be (קדש) holy, dedicated to Yahweh.

28. John Bright, op. cit., pp. 492-493. Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 309. S. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, New York, Meridian Books, 1956, pp. 207-208. These prefer an early date, late in the reign of Jotham or early in the reign of Ahaz.

29. Todd, op. cit., p. 178.

This concept arises from the prophetic insistence that Yahweh himself is the **שֶׁטֶר** one, and that everyone therefore who lives in the **שֶׁטֶר** mountain is himself to be **שֶׁטֶר**.³⁰

The heart of this concept was laid out by the prophet (2: 2-4) as "...the first and also the earliest expression of belief in the eschatological glorification of the holy mountain and of its significance for the redemption of the entire world."³¹ The text is undoubtedly Isaianic in origin, despite its recurrence in Micah 4:1 ff, where it does not fit nearly so well.³² The course of events is rooted in the cult and may well reflect the pilgrimage to Jerusalem which Isaiah witnessed each year at the time of the Feast of Booths. Here he has dynamically drawn together the already extant material and has brought out of it the uniquely Isaianic concept that Zion is the source of the promulgation and fulfillment of divine law, both for Judah and for other nations, and is therefore also the source of ethics and morality. The picture is ideal, and to that extent eschatological.

It shall come to pass in the latter days
that the mountain of the house of the Lord
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;

30. Ibid., pp. 181-182.

31. Von Rad, "The City," op. cit., p. 233.

32. Ibid., pp. 233-234. However Eissfeldt, op. cit., p. 318, and Pfeiffer, op. cit., pp. 590-591, assign the section to a post-exilic date and posit that it was later added to both prophets.

and all the nations shall flow to it,
 and many peoples shall come,
 and say;
 Come, let us go up to the mountain
 of the Lord
 to the house of the God of Jacob;
 that he may teach us his ways,
 that we may walk in his paths.
 For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
 and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

2: 2-4

Isaiah pursues the theme even further in 28: 16-22, bringing it closer to bear upon the social situation in Jerusalem itself, in a speech directed primarily towards the inept rulers of the city. (28: 14) Here we see Zion set as a foundation (**מוֹסֵד**) and a cornerstone (**פִּנֵּת**) in which men are to believe (**מֵאֲמִין**) and not be in haste (**יְהִי־שׁ**), or become so involved in the activity of their own administration that they neglect to consider the ultimate source of law and morality. Yahweh, who is in the midst of Zion, will make justice (**מִשְׁפָּט**) the line and righteousness (**צְדָקָה**) the plummet, while hail sweeps away the refuge of lies and waters will overwhelm the shelter. Jerusalem's covenant with death and agreement with Sheol will not stand when the scourge of judgment passes through.

The theme is reiterated in 33: 5-6 in which Isaiah exclaims,

The Lord is exalted, for he dwells on high;
 he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness;
 and he will be the stability **אֲמוֹנָה** of
 your times.

and in verses 20-22 he calls upon the people to look upon

Zion, the city of their appointed feasts, a quiet habitation, an immovable tent. There Yahweh in his majesty will be for his people a place of broad rivers and streams where no galley may pass, for Yahweh is their judge, ruler, and king.

Zion, therefore, emerges as the foundation stone of morality itself, insofar as Yahweh dwells in her. It is the fulcrum of his moral action in Israel's history. Here we see an example of Isaiah's shrewd use of tradition, taking what was originally the myth of the divine protection of a holy mountain, and under the impact of a Yahwistic faith, expanding it to its fullest moral implications in history. To do this, Isaiah altered the message in two ways. He called for the people's faith in Yahweh as a condition of morality and salvation, and he looked upon other nations, not merely as recipients of Isaiah's insight and faith, but as Yahweh's instruments in judging Israel's failure and bringing about his plans in her. ³³.

Zion, in Isaiah's view, is dependent upon Yahweh's presence completely; without him she is nothing. Thus there is no intrinsic value in speaking about the inviolability of Zion, per se, apart from Yahweh's purpose in preserving her, and using her as the foundation and cornerstone of social integration and ethics. This may not have been true in the Zion concept of pre-Davidic Jerusalem, but it certainly

33. Hayes, op. cit., pp. 425-426.

was true of Isaiah's thought, and for a good reason. To place too much emphasis upon Zion, apart from Yahweh, would short circuit the concept of faith and turn it into idolatry, and Isaiah realized it. As loyal as he was to Zion, he knew how to be harsh with false emphasis upon the cult. (ch. 1) "The temple of God in Jerusalem is indeed a great privilege, but it is still more a cause for great responsibility; for it means that the living, holy God dwells in Jerusalem. This is the reason for the importance of Zion; its value is founded in him only." ³⁴ It is to Isaiah's credit that he was never ruled by the past, nor in spite of his eschatological interest, by the future, but that he was able to see his own time in the light of Yahweh, the living God. The same could not be said of his followers, who, following the death of Sennacherib, naively placed such exorbitant trust in the infallibility of Zion, that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were obliged to oppose the idea altogether. ³⁵

THE ETHICAL FUNCTION OF KINGSHIP

Important as the Zion concept was in Isaiah, his domestic policy was based upon twin foundations rather than a single one. The second was Yahweh's covenant with the Davidic dynasty, the concept more fully explored in the last chapter. One must distinguish between the Zion and

34. Vriezen, op. cit., pp. 130-131.

35. Fullerton, op. cit., p. 53 ff.

the David traditions.

It is not true that Zion plays a part as the political center of power for David; rather it is the abode of God. The house of David is mentioned as the ruling dynasty (chs. 8, 22), and twice his throne is mentioned in the messianic expectation (16:5; 9:6); but the house of David will first of all collapse, at any rate in the later prophecies (11:1), before it can play that part. ³⁶

While Zion symbolized the source of social integration and morality through Yahweh's presence, the Davidic dynasty provided the means for the working out of that integration, morality and ethics in the human scene. The king, the adopted son of Yahweh, ruled as Yahweh's representative, according to the terms of the covenant between Yahweh and the house of David. ³⁷

The idea that Yahweh had established David's throne in Jerusalem and made him far reaching promises was current in David's lifetime, though it is uncertain to what extent this reflected the common belief of the people and to what extent it was merely a matter of court theology. But Isaiah, being closely connected with the royal court, was certainly heir to it. And like the Zion theology, Israel's kingship-function undoubtedly borrowed patterns originally a part of pre-Israelite Jerusalem. What we can know of these patterns is only what is traceable in the so-called 'Royal Psalms', ³⁸

Confidantly Hayes remarks that the connection of this Davidic tradition with the enthronement of new kings and

36. Vriezen, op. cit., p. 130.

37. Clements, op. cit., p. 56.

38. Von Rad, "OT Theo.", op. cit., p. 169.

the royal psalms (especially 18, 89, 110, and 132) is clearly evident. Beginning with the original Jebusite forms, "further development in this tradition took place when the royal enthronement declarations concerning the Davidic house were connected with pre-Israelite material taken over from Jebusite thought and worship." ³⁹

The reiteration, in these psalms, of the fact that righteousness and justice attend the throne of David, provides some hint of the fact that it was through the king that Yahweh acted in order to maintain social order. Professor Mendenhall finds that in ancient oriental society generally, "the maintenance of justice and the protection of the community are the two functions of the king for which he has been chosen by the gods. What that meant in practice is probably that the legal policies were determined by the king and therefore received divine sanction, though it is probably true that even the king could not proclaim as policy something which was contrary to the interests of the most influential body of citizens." ⁴⁰ The king was most probably the court of appeals and the supreme court, so that even the village elders could be over-ruled in a legal case. In the person of the king, a heterogeneous group

39. Hayes, op.cit., p. 420. Also, Kraus, op. cit., Exkurs 1, "Die Weltherrschaft Des Königs Von Jerusalem," pp. 14-16.

40. George E. Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East, Pittsburgh, The Presbyterian Board of Colportage, 1955, p. 4.

of clans, with differing concepts of justice, were welded together into a self conscious nation.

The kingship of Israel, therefore, was intended to be the means for the preservation of Israelite social integration, and not to preside over its disintegration.

The monarchy had to maintain the continuity of Israelite religious traditions, and at the same time suppress, ignore, or alter certain characteristics most clearly associated with them....It was David who worked out the modus vivendi so successfully that his reign was always regarded as the Golden Age (which was to be re-established in the hopes of later generations), in spite of the fact that Solomon ruled in much more glory." 41

This ethical function of kingship, along with its theological foundations, is seen in certain of the oldest historical writings of the Old Testament, most notably the Nathan oracle in II Samuel 7: 8-17. Here we see the creative tension between the concepts of Zion as Yahweh's dwelling place, the king as Yahweh's appointed and adopted ruler, and the ethical nature of Israel's existence. While David is not allowed to build the temple, nonetheless Solomon will be allowed to build the house for Yahweh's name, the place where Yahweh, who legitimates David's rule (7:8), shall dwell (17:13). The adoptive relationship is established by the phrase, "I will be his father and he shall be my son." (7:14) The ethical nature of the king's rule is stated with the idea that when the king commits iniquity,

41. Ibid., pp. 44-45.

Yahweh will chasten him and, then ^{will} strengthened and assured ^{him} with the statement that Yahweh will never take from the king his **TOP**, his all encompassing redemptive goodness, which sustains life, and holds it together in solidarity. His final promise is that the throne shall remain forever. Thus this oracle deals not only with Yahweh's dwelling-place in Jerusalem, but as well with the divine right of the Davidic dynasty to rule. "The promise that David's throne would be established by Yahweh, both for David himself and for his sons, was not only a personal aggrandizement for the king, but conveyed an expression of how Yahweh himself willed that his people Israel should be governed." ⁴²

When the other oracles dealing with kingship and ethics in Isaiah are considered, this same function is revealed. Most prominently chapter 11 develops the concept of the anointed one, the ideal Davidide as one upon whom the spirit of Yahweh rests, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, who with righteousness will judge the poor, and with equity will decide for the meek of the earth. With the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked, righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist and faithfulness the girdle of his loins.

Like the royal psalms-cp. particularly Ps. 72:12-14- Isaiah regards the anointed one's commission as consisting pre-eminently in the establishment of the divine justice on earth. The prophet's insistence

42. Clements, op. cit., p. 58.

that the anointed one has at his disposal, both for his investigators and for punishing the guilty, such divine properties as omniscience and the power to cause instant death by word alone probably takes him beyond the traditional teachings of the royal theology. The third part (vss. 6-8), which agrees with traditional concepts, tells of the paradisial peace which is to accompany the reign of this annointed one, and to bring order even into the world of nature and to resolve its conflicts. 43

The theme occurs again in chapter 33: 17-22 (cf. also 32: 1-8), in which the coming of the king is merged with the image of a world in which one will no longer find insolent people, a world in which Yahweh will rule in Zion and justice will be the order of the day. The king thus emerges as the instrument of Yahweh for the preservation of social integration and ethics.

That this covenant concept was more than mere cultic ritual can be seen from the frequent prophetic denunciations directed toward those rulers who failed to follow Yahweh's rule, or who, in one way or another, failed to maintain justice in the land. In confronting Ahaz's lack of trust in Yahweh, Isaiah "...pointed beyond the coming destruction to a time when Yahweh would begin again, and would raise up a true heir to David." 44 This was tantamount to saying that the contemporary descendant of David had lost the saving function so emphatically attributed to him in the royal psalms, 45 because he had failed to take seriously the fact that the

43. Von Rad, "OT Theo.", op. cit., p. 170.

44. Clements, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

45. Von Rad, "OT Theo", op. cit., p. 171.

paradox that strength (Is. 30:15) resided in quietness and trust, was actually being recommended to him as a definite mode of political action.

The faithlessness of the king could be held up as the cause of confusion and injustice among subordinate rulers as well. After describing the pattern of social disintegration in chapter 3, the prophet laments in verse 12:

O my people, your leaders mislead you,
And confuse the course of your paths. 3:12

Yahweh then enters into judgment with the elders and the princes of his people, and the verdict is unalterably clear.

It is you who have devoured the vineyard,
the spoil of the poor is in your houses. 3:14

As was pointed out earlier with regard to the function of Zion, when those who have been chosen to rule under Yahweh are taken up by him, or break their relationship with him established through the king, all of society disintegrates, and the corresponding disease becomes the direct cause of immorality and lack of ethical concern. It was the king's specific function to maintain this social integration by the proclamation and enforcement of the ethical patterns of the Israelite people, either by himself, or through his various subordinate officials. That the rulers in Isaiah's day had clearly not lived up to their covenant function was evident from the disintegrating ethical patterns in Jerusalem, and the consequent condemnation of the prophet;

Therefore hear the word of the Lord,
you scoffers, who rule this people in Jerusalem.
28:14.

THE SHAPE OF THE SOCIAL ORDER

The prophets were deeply concerned with the nature of the social order in which they lived, and with Yahweh's historic purpose to create for himself a people. The form of their social order largely determines a people's way of living and even the pattern of its thought. The nature and purposes of political authority, economic and class interests, social institutions, the way in which the individual finds his place in the community, and the physical factors under which the community must exist, are all factors affecting the quality of personal relationships within a community and the worth of life itself. It was with these things that the prophets were concerned. "It was for them a religious imperative that society be so ordered as to make possible and to support a way of life which is good in the eyes of Yahweh." ⁴⁶

Certain of the classical prophets, such as Jeremiah, found this pattern and motivation for social order in the Mosaic covenant. For Isaiah, it lay in the amalgamation of the Zion and David traditions and their attending theology. "We can in no way isolate the doctrine of Mount Zion's election from belief in Yahweh's choice of David as ruler over Israel, for both find their meaning and origin in the political events of David's reign." ⁴⁷ Together they provided

⁴⁶. R.B.Y. Scott, The Relevance of the Prophets, New York, The Mac Millan Company, 1947, p. 158.

⁴⁷. Clements, op. cit., p. 61.

the foundation upon which was built the integration of the social order and the maintenance of morality and ethics.

The fact that this ideal was not always fully realized in Israelite society, or the fact that even Isaiah in his anguish and exasperation looked for a future realization of the ideal, ought not to lead us to the notion that Isaiah thought of this foundation as purely eschatological, in the sense that it had no validity for the present. Indeed, its validity for the present was the central source of power in his prophetic denunciation. This ideal was envisioned for the future, in a sense, so that it could be read back into the present. Von Rad is correct in noticing that 'quite a number of Isaiah's utterances reveal a remarkable concentration of thought about questions concerning the national life, that is to say, a concern for the forms of government appropriate to a society whose founder is Yahweh. In this connection he never once thinks in terms of the amphictyony; first and foremost he thinks of the chosen people as a polis.⁴⁸ But unlike Von Rad's tendency to relegate this polis concept to something merely eschatological, it is necessary to emphasize that eschatology's main value lies in its effect upon the preaching of the present. The polis concept, to Isaiah, represented the way in which Jerusalem ought to be conceived now, with its vital relationship between the presence of Yahweh upon Zion, the reign of the

⁴⁸ 48. Von Rad, "OT Theo.", op. cit., p. 150.

Davidic dynasty, and the maintenance of social integration and solidarity. The proper functioning of this combination, Isaiah maintained, would make for just administration and the proper enforcement of Israel's inherited ethical traditions.

The origin and nature of that ethic is difficult to trace, in part because of the enigmatic relation of Isaiah to the sort of covenant background which so clearly defines the roles of the other prophets. That certain elements of earlier Israelite law were subsumed under the Davidic monarchy as general principle and thereupon taken for granted by Isaiah can probably be inferred from the fact that the Ark resided in the temple as a symbol of the amalgamation of early Israelite traditions and pre-Israelite Jerusalem traditions, and also from those denunciations of Isaiah which parallel certain amphictyonic ideals, such as the 'woe' speeches against typical urban corruptions in 5:8-12.⁴⁹ But there was certainly a mixture of other legal material accompanying the royal theology, as well as certain general near eastern legal strains which would certainly have influenced the prophet as well.

Professor Porteous subsumes all of these strains under the concept of Torah, which following the semantic studies of Östborn, Albright, and Driver, he identifies with the Akkadian 'tertu', 'message' or 'law' because in Israel law was thought of as something which had to be taught to the

49. Todd, op. cit., p. 173. Todd mentions that this may be attributed to the influence of Micah's invective. "As an inhabitant of the city he probably was unaware of the condition of the country districts until the celebrated sermon opened his eyes."

individual or the people, it presumably being different enough from the original amphictyonic backgrounds so that such socially sponsored instruction was necessary. "In this way it could mean the instruction given by the priests about ritual and cultic matters and in addition the ethical instruction which they also frequently imparted." ⁵⁰ It could also refer to;

...the moral and religious instruction given by the prophets, as, for example, by Isaiah, where he is calling for obedience to God's moral law which was being neglected flagrantly by men who sought to appease him with a multitude of sacrifices, and once again by Isaiah for the prophetic testimony which he was bequeathing to his disciples after he saw quite clearly that Ahaz was not prepared to stake ⁵¹ everything upon faith in God.

The basis of the moral code seems, then, to have been that set of ethics which the priests should have been teaching to the people and were not. Law in Israel was cultically proclaimed, and of a consequence was the special concern of the cult and its officials, as well as of those who were responsible for administering case law. ⁵² The positive content of this law can be negatively inferred in part by noticing Isaiah's denunciations of such crimes as rebellion against Yahweh as the root of sin (1:2ff), rejection of Yahweh's law (5:24), the absolute value of sacrifice over

⁵⁰. Porteous, op. cit., pp. 148-149. Also Vriezen, op. cit., p. 135.

⁵¹. Porteous, op. cit., pp. 148-149.

⁵². Clements, op. cit., pp. 71-72.

obedience (1:10-15), murdering, thievery, bribery and deception (1:21-23; 5:23; 29:13-15). neglect of the fatherless and widows (1:23; 10:2), worship at the high places (1:29-30), foreign divining and soothsaying (2:6), idolatry and trust in material things (2:7-8; 2:20), social oppression and insolence (3:5), vanity of women (3: 16-23), drunkenness (5:11-12; 5:22; 28: 7-8; 29:9), the tempting of Yahweh (5: 18-19), confusion of good and evil (5: 20), pride (5:22), and the breaking of covenants (33: 8). This strongly ethical claim of religion was rooted in the covenant, and its injunctions sought to prevent any conduct detrimental to the life and welfare of the covenant people. ⁵³

It is obvious that the content of such a varied code did not reflect any one source, but a group of sources welded together under the theology of the monarchy and interpreted within the context of its administration. Here again Professor Porteous is helpful in organizing this ethic according to three possible sources, (1) tradition, as we have already seen, which undoubtedly comprised both the early Israelite and the pre-Israelite Jerusalem tradition, ⁵⁴ (2) the personal divine confrontation of the prophets with Yahweh which

53. Ibid., p. 185.

54. E. Hammershaimb, "On the Ethics of the Old Testament Prophets," VT, Supplement, Vol. III, Congress Volume, 1959, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1960; claims that the law regarding the widows and fatherless, so prevalent in Isaiah, came from a Canaanite background, reflecting as it does conditions of a high urban society where tribal loyalties would no longer provide for people in this situation. p. 86.

gave the prophets a sense for the ethic beyond the written law as well as for the interpretation of the existing statutes, and (3) a wider ethics, behind and permeating Israelite tradition, which Israel shared with the other peoples of antiquity. To this he adds that there are hints that the prophets had some conception of a cosmic law and a universal ethics as well. ⁵⁵

From this foundational concept of Zion, Davidic dynasty, and social integration and ethics, Isaiah was in a position to assess with keen insight the forces which made for social disintegration in Jerusalem. And as we would expect, his analysis followed the very lines of his classical theory of social organization. He held that the open disregard for the law was symptomatic of the general disintegration of society which was in turn symptomatic of the failure of the David and Zion traditions to play their intended roles. Therefore the three forces basically responsible for this disintegration were the antitheses of the three classical categories of his system; (1) the estrangement of the people from Yahweh, (2) the weakness of Jerusalem's rulers, and (3) the neglect by the people of Yahweh's law.

The fact that Isaiah saw estrangement from Yahweh as the basic sin of his people points to the fact that Isaiah's views of both proper order and sin were at heart religious.

55. Porteous, op. cit., pp. 153 and 155.

"On closer examination, sin proves to be essentially revolt against Yahweh (1:2; 1:4), contempt for Yahweh (3:8ff; 5:4ff; 8:6; 28:12; 29:15ff; 30:9-13, 15), and derision of Yahweh (5: 18ff). With the words 'sarar' (1:23; 30:1) and 'sara' (1:5; 31: 6), 'rebellion' and 'being rebellious', he characterizes the attitude of his people." ⁵⁶ He lashes out against the neglect of Yahweh (17: 10; 22:11), not having faith in Yahweh (7:9; 22:11; 31:1), and not being obedient (28:12; 30:9, 15; 1:19). With the people's failure to recognize Yahweh, all of their standards pass away. The real object of their fear and reverence is not Yahweh, but the gods of the material civilization about them.

With their rejection of Yahweh there occurs also a separation of Yahweh from his people, a pulling away of his support, causing the blinding of men's spiritual sensibilities and the tumbling apart of society. In chapter 3, as we have seen earlier, Yahweh takes away stay and staff, and social disintegration results. In 29:9ff, one sees people in a drunken stupor, blind of all values, staggering under strong drink, for Yahweh has poured out upon them a spirit of sleep and has taken away the prophets and seers whose task it is to provide religious insight. In chapter 2:6ff Yahweh has rejected his people, because their land is full of materialism, divination and idolatry. Indeed, if the Lord

56. Vriezen, op. cit., p. 134.

had not been so kind as to leave a few survivors, Jerusalem ^would have been as Sodom and Gomorrhah. The separation between Yahweh and people is complete and bilateral.

They have forsaken the Lord,
they have despised the Holy One of Israel,
they are utterly estranged. 1:4

Following upon this, the second force making for social disintegration was the folly of the rulers whose responsibility it was to maintain a relationship with Yahweh on the one side, and social order on the other.

Princes are scoundrels (1:23), judges are corrupt, acquitting the guilty for a bribe and depriving the innocent of his right (5:23). They do not defend the fatherless, and the widow's case does not come to them (1:23). The people are being crushed by the elders and princes, while the mansions of the wealthy contain the spoils of the poor (3:14ff). And in spite of all of this, the knave is called noble, and the churl is said to be honorable. 57

The sort of insubordination among the ruling classes of which Isaiah spoke was clearly to be seen in Shebna's attempt to arrogate extra power to himself, as well as in Eliakim's failure to live up to expectations. (ch. 22: 15-25)

With such leadership at the helm of state, one could hardly blame the populace for the neglect of the law, but third, and finally, Isaiah did. For in this sorry state of affairs, all men share the blame. In their rejection of Yahweh, men inevitably fall back upon pride in themselves, a pride so devisive that it rends the social fabric from top

to bottom. The land is filled with idols (2:8), men are haughty and full of pride (2:11) and yet regard themselves as wise and shrewd (5:21). They are even devoid of the simple insight with which an animal is endowed, knowing whose he is. (1:3) As sons has Yahweh raised them, yet they have rebelled against him. Their "...callousness is sovereign and smug; it clings to the soul and will not give in. The crack of doom is in the air, but the people, unperturbed are carried away by a rage to be merry." ⁵⁸ They have no idea how sick they really are, but Isaiah describes it in graphic terms in chapter 30:13ff. Their iniquity has caused their social structure to be as a high wall with a break in it, bulging out, and about to collapse, whose crash comes suddenly in an instant, and its breaking is like that of a potter's vessel which is smashed so ruthlessly that not a shred can be found. Ultimately Jerusalem's social structure will disintegrate into nothing, for such is the price which a people pays when the whole foundation of its social order is subject to neglect.

RESTORATION OF THE SOCIAL ORDER

Curiously Isaiah does not close with this classical analysis of the ills of the current domestic policy. In fact it is his journey beyond analysis to a constructive

58. Ibid., p. 90.

view of Jerusalem's future which rescues him from the world of social theorists for the world of statesmanship and religious leadership. Isaiah conceived of a judgment of Yahweh interwoven with the historical process, leading to the salvation of a remnant of the people, and the eventual restoration of Israel. It was largely due to the flagrant abuse of the covenant law that he was able to view the social disintegration of the empire as the direct cause of Yahweh's wrath. And projecting into the future, he could posit a restoration of Israel on the basis of Yahweh's concern for his people.

The sin of the people could be purged only by a judgment from Yahweh himself. The mere words of a prophet are powerless against it, as indeed Yahweh had said they would be from the beginning. (6:9-10) For all of this a purgation would be necessary, which as we shall see in the next chapter, would be effected by the outcome of the contemporary international struggle, during which Judah would be over-run, and even Zion, Yahweh's dwelling place, would only escape miraculously. This movement of the nations was to be instigated by Yahweh himself, (10: 5-11) and was to be absolute, for His people deserved nothing better. The extermination of all arrogance must be undertaken by a radical historical process, for the end is nothing less than the extinction of evil, part of Isaiah's great eschatological dream. His people must suffer to become worthy of redemption, 'those

who err in spirit will come to understanding, and those who murmur will accept instruction.'

But will Zion itself, the dwelling place of Yahweh, see destruction? On this point the scholarly world is divided, generally speaking, over the question of how integral Zion itself is to Yahweh's continued presence with his people, and the apparent tension which exists between his preaching of absolute judgment, and his behavior in some of the historical sections of the book, as well as some of his other utterances.⁵⁹ The difference of opinion is largely between those who view the problem theologically and those who view it cultically. Th. C. Vriezen, who begins theologically, sees it as unlikely that Isaiah would maintain the saving of Jerusalem simply because it was the dwelling place of God,⁶⁰ while Von Rad who begins with the cultic background sees the salvation of Zion as a necessary part of Isaiah's preaching.⁶¹

It is probably undeniable that a certain view of Zion's inviolability, and hence its ultimate preservation, formed part of the cultural milieu upon which Isaiah drew in his preaching. But like all the other of his inherited traditions,

59. Vriezen, op. cit., pp. 138-139, and W. A. Irwin, "The Attitude of Isaiah in the Crisis of 701," JR, Vol. 16, 1936, pp. 406-418 come out against the notion that Isaiah looked for Zion's salvation, while Todd, Hayes, and Von Rad hold out for it in one form or another.

60. Vriezen, op. cit., p. 139.

61. Von Rad, "OT Theo.," op. cit., pp. 165-166.

he molded it uniquely according to the historical circumstances of his own time. Vriezen is undoubtedly right in saying that, "...Isaiah, though preaching the destruction of Israel and Judah, did not start with this idea as a fixed dogma." ⁶²

By the same token he probably did not begin with the inviolability of Zion as a fixed dogma, but as a tradition with which he could symbolize Yahweh's presence in the midst of his people, and point to the fact that what was happening was Yahweh's doing, strange as those happenings might seem. He knew, because of his inherited traditions, that God waged a deadly war against Israel because of the fact that these traditions had been so flagrantly violated. His true greatness lay in his caution against saying too much about divine interference in the world until it was an accomplished fact. Isaiah was well aware of Yahweh's presence and his promises, but from a human point of view the exact outcome was still in the hands of Yahweh, and therefore ~~open ended~~ ^{not yet known to him.}

The fact that Isaiah retained that doctrine in his background, however, gave him a natural lead into his further doctrine that a remnant would be saved. Yahweh's protection of Zion would not include all people. Judgment decreed that those who rebelled against Yahweh would perish, but those who did not would be saved. This doctrine "...was a novelty, and he impressed it on the minds of the people

62. Vriezen, op. cit., p. 141.

by naming his eldest son Shear-Yashub, i.e., 'a remnant shall return.' Hitherto the nation had been a unity before Yahweh in the eyes of his prophets. Isaiah now discriminates between whom Yahweh will preserve and those who will perish."⁶³ Later on, Isaiah carries this concept beyond the plane of the actual into a future state when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea," at which time not only will there exist perfect harmony between all human inhabitants according to the broad outlines of Isaiah's classical plan, but this harmony will extend symbolically to the animal kingdom as well.

The final kingpin in the system, which gave Isaiah the assurance that his classical scheme was meant to be worked out in history, was the fact that all of this was according to the plan of Yahweh, a plan which was first revealed to the prophet in his initial calling. "The prophet who saw history as the stage for God's work, where kingdoms and empires rise for a time and vanish, perceived a design beyond the mists and shadows of the moment."⁶⁴ Viewing the acts of God in the world, Isaiah became aware that Yahweh had a design for the world, a design which he knew and followed.⁶⁵ This plan was brilliantly delineated by Johannes Fichtner

63. Todd, op. cit., pp. 180-181.

64. Heschel, op. cit., p. 66.

65. Vriezen, op. cit., p. 142.

as emerging from Isaiah's use of the terms נָסַח and נִסְחָה ,
'to advise, counsel, or plan,' and 'advice, counsel, plan.' ⁶⁶

"The idea of the counsel of God is connected with the representation of Yahweh as king, and is one of the prophet's early established convictions. A counsel is a preparation for action and in many cases decides the future; at any rate this is so with regard to the decree of God. " ⁶⁷

Isaiah used this concept of 'counsel' both for the action of men and God, as well as for the savior whom he expected, and who was characterized by his counsel (9:5; 11:2). The idea was used as a radical assertion of Yahweh's holiness and his claim to sovereignty, and in the later preaching of Isaiah, the wonder of Yahweh's plan came more to the fore (cf. 28:29; 29:14). Divine insight was revealed in all the acts of Yahweh, though they might seem very different from each other in character. In the end, they all revealed his ultimate wisdom.

It was through Yahweh's divine plan that judgment would be brought upon his people and it was by his plan that Israel would again be restored according to the classical idyllic¹ pattern which formed Isaiah's grand concept. That perfect harmony between all the elements of Yahweh's creation,

66. Johannes Fichtner, "Jahves Plan in der Botschaft des Jesaja," ZAW, Vol., 63, 1951, pp. 16-33.

67. Vriezen, op. cit., p. 142.

held in place by Yahweh's presence upon Zion, his rule through the Davidic dynasty, and the just administration of law among his people would one day be brought about according to Yahweh's plan. Without that faith, Isaiah could never have conceived the intricate pattern which formed his domestic policy.

CHAPTER FOUR

ISAIAH AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Isaiah stands out uniquely from the other classical prophets of Israel in that he appears to have been a critic of the official regime of his time, not from the outside, but from within, not merely an observer of the flux of historic events, but a voice in the framing of public and official opinion, however much his voice was heeded in official circles. For fifty years he towered over the contemporary scene, and, though perhaps few in his day realized it, more than any other individual, guided the nation through her hours of tragedy and crisis.¹ Though he may have been a priest in the temple, he was clearly a confidant and advisor to the Judaeen kings Ahaz and Hezekiah. Though he seems to impose himself upon Ahaz, there are clear instances when Hezekiah called upon him purposely for his opinions (notably II Kings 19: 2-7) and others in which Hezekiah openly revealed to him the otherwise secret matters of state. (II Kings 20: 14-15).

As a result of this association, he offers, on the subject of international relations, a wealth of comment commensurate with his long career, during which he witnessed the weakening of his own country and the inevitable onslaught of Assyrian imperialism. "From the days of Uzziah to the end of the reign of Hezekiah, and consequently for more than a generation, he followed closely all the events of

1. John Bright, A History of Israel, Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1959, p. 273.

any consequence which happened in the nation, and dealt with them in his prophetic utterances." ²

He witnessed four major international crises, in the midst of which he proved his mettle as a diplomatic and political advisor of the first order.

The extent and variety of the contacts between Israel and Judah and foreign powers were vastly greater in the lifetime of Isaiah than they had been in the ministries of any of his predecessors. Above all, Isaiah attempted for the first time on a broad basis to do justice to foreign nations as realities in their own right. He tried to discern their inner motivations, their guilt and deserved retribution, and their right to mutual consideration in a community ³ of nations.

The picture one gets of him is one of a highly complex individual, comprehending in broad sweep and yet in intricate detail the subtle tensions and nuances of his times, understanding the ambiguities both in history and in himself, cutting fine distinctions and meeting events situationally like a polished diplomat, while at the same time reconciling and molding seemingly contradictory polarities of thought and tradition under a sophisticated form of Yahwism in a manner which places him among the ranks of the great in both religion and politics. He raised up, in the midst of international complexities, the motif of Yahweh, dwelling upon Mount Zion, as the judge of all national prides, including

2. R. Kittel, A History of the Hebrews, Vol. II, trans. by Hope Hogg and E. B. Speirs, Oxford, Williams and Norgate, 1896, p. 339.

3. Norman K. Gottwald, All the Kingdoms of the Earth, New York, Harper and Row, 1964, p. 204.

that of Assyria, as a controlling principle, showing that "...one and the same nation, whether it be Judah or Assyria, may be both the instrument of Yahweh and a rebel against Yahweh and that the divine plan for history must reckon with both of these realities - and so also must the plans of men. Toward the end of his life he conceived of a confederation of nations which solves its disputes by prophetic arbitration." ⁴

True to greatness, also, he prized the qualities of calmness and presence of mind, and distrusted anything which smacked of haste, fear, or insecure reaction. (7:4; 8:12-13) In this he put himself on the side of that maturity which makes for constructive and solid progress, and aligned himself against the forces of unthinking reactionism and degeneration.

The period of history during which Isaiah uttered his proclamations on international relations was that period from approximately 742, three years after the rise of Tiglath-pileser III to the Assyrian throne, to 701, or shortly after, when Sennacherib moved south to crush a coalition of Judah and Babylon and to weaken the power of Egypt, now under the twenty fourth dynasty. During this period two major and two minor crises were precipitated, all of which centered around the internal weakness of Judah and the ascending power of Assyria. The

4. Ibid., p. 147.

first major crisis was the Syro-Ephraimitic war, in which Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel allied against Ahaz of Judah in an attempt to force him into an anti-Assyrian coalition. The attempt was aborted by Tiglath-pileser's response to Ahaz's appeal to move south and break up the attempt, a move which lost most of the northern kingdom to the Assyrians, and culminated eventually in the fall of Samaria to Sargon II in 722.

The second major crisis was the invasion of the south by Sennacherib in 701 following attempted alliances between Hezekiah of Judah, Merodach-Baladan of Babylon, and Shabako of Egypt. This alliance, too, was broken up, though not as successfully as the first.

In between these two crises lay a general period of revolt and turmoil, from 721 to 713 B.C., in which two minor crises took place; first two successive revolts by Merodach-Baladan (721 B.C.) and one Iaubidi of Hamath, abetted by Egypt in 720 B.C., and second a rebellion on the part of Ashdod in 713 B.C.

In both cases, the revolts were crushed. During this period Isaiah, in his advisory capacity, was answerable not only to the swiftly changing world conditions about him, but also to differing parties and views within Judah itself. His was a problem of mediating between pro-Assyrian and anti-Assyrian elements in the Judaeen government, while at

the same time preserving the integrity of the monarchy and Judah's cult traditions, and finally, and foremost, emphasizing the role of the plan of Yahweh both in Judah and in the sphere of international relations.

All of these elements are skillfully combined in Isaiah's call in chapter 6, which, in a real sense represents the introduction to Isaiah's work, and the theological foundation for his actions. The call came ca. 742-740,

...the year of Uzziah's death and of Pekah's anti-Assyrian revolt in Israel. It was thus the consummate moment of the passing of Israelite-Judean hegemony over Syria-Palestine and simultaneously the moment of rapid Assyrian penetration of the West. The cosmic scope of Isaiah's interest is manifest in his call vision of the transcendent Yahweh, king of the world, who is associated with, but not confined to, the temple in Jerusalem. He is the Holy One, beyond all comparison with his creation, but nonetheless ^{pr} present to his creation inasmuch as his glory fills ⁵ the entire earth.

From Yahweh's transcendence, the passage moves immediately to Isaiah's direct mission, to bring guidance in an atmosphere of confusion and closed mindedness, and from there to the brutal realities of Judah's future, the facts of which imply Yahweh's use of other nations to bring destruction. Indeed, so closely tied are those motifs, that we can safely say that none of them could stand alone. Without Yahweh, guidance in the midst of closed mindedness and destruction would have no source, and on the other hand, the idea of Yahweh as transcendent would be purposeless

5. Ibid., p. 148.

without the concrete situations to which Isaiah addressed himself. Moreover,

...the grouping of the materials in chapters 6-8 so that the reports and oracles of the international crisis of 735-733 in chapters 7-8 follow immediately upon the call vision further expresses the unity of Isaiah's view of God and his view of the international scene. In his call vision and audition, as elsewhere in the book of Isaiah, the prophet is dependent upon the royal cult traditions in which the kingship of Yahweh was celebrated in the coronation of the Israelite king and in subsequent state ceremonies.⁶

However, at certain important points, he naturally turns these traditions toward his own ends.

FROM THE SYRO-EPHRAIMITIC WAR TO THE DEATH OF AHAZ

It was one of those ironic twists of history which placed a young, inexperienced, and largely incompetent king like Ahaz on the Judaeen throne precisely during the period when the Near East was undergoing its most dramatic shift of political realities. During his lifetime Judah went from the heights of Uzziah's political revival to the depths of semi-complete dependence upon Assyria, amidst a confusing flurry of minor revolts, so that on the eve of his death, real power in the Near East was distributed between the poles of Egypt and Assyria. A youthful king, unable, in his insecurity, to separate himself from certain partisan interests in his own country, was hardly the man for the hour. Consequently, the burden of looking after

6. Ibid., p. 148.

the good of the land rested upon the shoulder of prophecy, a clear indication of the significance of this unique phenomenon in Israel.⁷

The Syro-Ephraimitic problem was one which Ahaz inherited from both Jotham and Uzziah, and in a real sense, Ahaz's pro-Assyrian reaction against his predecessors was determined by a certain mild bankruptcy in their foreign policies. Under them, Judah had repelled Assyria about as long as was practically feasible. "In the annals of Tiglath-pileser III we find two important fragments, which, (in) spite of the defectiveness of the text, make this much at least perfectly clear, namely that Azariah (Uzziah) of Judah is here mentioned as the opponent of Tiglath-pileser, and in fact as being at the head of a coalition of Syrian towns formed against Assyria..."⁸ Jotham who followed had drained the last dregs of that opposition policy dry, leaving open to Ahaz only neutrality or submission as real alternatives. That the need for a shift of policy was pronounced and urgent is made clear by the fact that attacks on Judah by the Syro-Ephraimitic coalition had apparently already begun in Jotham's reign, as an attempt to influence the course of Judaeon politics.

Rezin and Pekah, who had observed Jotham strengthening his fortifications while Tiglath-pileser was occupied in

7. Kittel, op. cit., p. 343.

8. Ibid., p. 335.

the East, ⁹ had undoubtedly assumed that Judah would participate in an anti-Assyrian revolt. ¹⁰ But they failed to reckon with the fact that their aggressive actions was serving to spur on a pro-Assyrian reaction within Judah, a party which by the time of Ahaz had gained enough momentum so that the youthful king could use it to assert his own distinctive rule over against his predecessors, and make what appeared to be an honorable change in a threadbare foreign policy.

When Ahaz came to power, "...he merely assessed the international situation since the rise of Tiglath-pileser with cool detachment and concluded that submission to Assyria as a loyal vassal would bring him more advantages than resistance to Assyria." ¹¹ The fact that Jotham's refusal to join the coalition had brought the combined power of Pekah and Rezin down upon him ¹² could only be balanced out by the introduction of a more powerful opposition than he could provide, so he called upon Assyria to attack from the North. In this move historians have often sympathized with him, for the aftermath of his policy was that Judah, in spite of its occasional vassalage, was never officially

9. Ibid., p. 338.

10. Gottwald, op. cit., p. 149.

11. Ibid., p. 150.

12. Kittel, op. cit., p. 339.

an Assyrian province.¹³

The policy, however, left him high and dry so far as the international picture was concerned. "He was speedily attacked on all sides by the conspirators, Pekah and Rezin from the North and East, Edom from the South, and the Philistines from the West. Kings reports his appeal to Tiglath-pileser as a desperate measure to relieve the siege of Jerusalem (II Kings 16: 5-9)." ¹⁴ It was the intention of the coalition to force its way into Judaeen politics and replace Ahaz with a son of one Tobiel, an Aramaean, and one outside the Davidic line.

Isaiah seemed to be aware of the implications of all these dealings from the very start, and appeared as something of a lonely voice against any aggressively pro-Assyrian moves. When he saw the anti-Assyrian coalition heading up, he felt assured that Tiglath-pileser would not tolerate it for long. The tablet inscribed with the name of his son, Mahershalalhashbaz, "the spoil speeds, the prey hastens," was designed to impress upon the Judaeans the ominous threat of the Assyrian leader's power, and the futility of participation in such an alliance. To this same period in the formation of the alliance belongs the oracle at the beginning of chapter 17, in which the doom of Damascus and

13. T. H. Robinson, A History of Israel, Vol. I, Oxford, At the Clarendon Press, 1932, p. 385.

14. Gottwald, op. cit., p. 150.

Ephraim is announced, but Judah is not involved.

It is safe to follow Scott in saying that verses 1-6 comprise a single unit made up of the twin oracles to Damascus and Ephraim.¹⁵ It is perhaps unnecessary to follow Procksch in omitting verse 4 on the basis of the name Jacob however. In the oldest Hebrew creed Jacob is referred to as a 'wandering Aramaean', whose connections, in any case, are within the Aramaean milieu being referred to in the oracle.¹⁶ The oracle presumably dates before the main thrust of the coalition was carried out, and has as its purpose to announce the destructive threat which the descending Assyrian power will surely have upon the city of Damascus and the fortress of Ephraim. Damascus will cease to be a city and will become instead a heap of ruins. The fortress will disappear from Ephraim and the glory of Jacob will be brought low, as when a reaper gathers grain.

While Isaiah was opposed to participation in such an alliance, he was also convinced that a pro-Assyrian policy

15. R.B.Y. Scott, "Isaiah, Introduction and Exegesis," Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 5, New York, Abingdon Press, 1956, p. 272. (Henceforth referred to as "Interp. Bib.")

16. There is considerable difference of opinion on the extent of the oracle. Kissane deals with vss. 1-11 as a unit, presuming that the material in verses 7-8 and 10-11 refer to the Israel portion of this double oracle. He is also against eliminating verse 4 in opposition to Procksch. Cheyne eliminates vss. 7-8 with the idea that it must be a later addition, and is probably justified in so doing. I would also agree with Scott and Bright that 9-11 was a later oracle directed toward Judah or Jerusalem on the basis of its linguistic and thematic affinities with 31:1, 22: 11 and 1:29. John Bright, "Isaiah I," Peake's Commentary on the Bible, ed. Matthew Black & H.H. Rowley, London, Thomas Nelson and Sons LTD., 1962. Edward Kissane, The Book of Isaiah, Dublin, Browne and Nolan LTD, 1941. T.K. Cheyne, Introduction to the Book of Isaiah, London, Adam and Charles Black, 1895.

was not the answer either. And in this matter he met Ahaz face to face on the highway to the Fuller's Field, where Ahaz was apparently inspecting his city's water system for the event of a siege. The prophet spoke openly, and with a full knowledge of the designs of the coalition. His words throughout carry a note of irony which is designed to heighten Ahaz's naiveté', his shortsightedness in believing that Rezin and Pekah could ever be more than 'two sparking stumps of firewood.'

The central point, however, which Isaiah is concerned to make, is that what seems to be the danger is not the real danger. "Do not call conspiracy all that this people call conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear." (8:12) The actual threat is in Ahaz's failure to trust in Yahweh, his tendency to run for outside help, rather than trust in the very God whose traditions he should be trying to protect by his office.

In taking this stance, Isaiah was facing up both to the political realities of his time and to the integrity of the Yahwistic faith, as it was expressed in the Jerusalem traditions. His assessment of Assyria was shrewd. He "...knew very well that Assyria would divert and overrun the besieging forces and thus would appear to 'save' Ahaz, but his deliverance from the hostile neighbors will not affect the deeper crisis in Judah, namely, its lack of faith, which exposes it to

the same fate as has moved inexorably against Israel and Damascus. Assyrian arms, invoked once by Judah, will advance steadily onward into Palestine." ¹⁷ (8: 7-8) If this were to happen, Ahaz, for lack of faith, would be sacrificing the throne of David, which in the name of Yahweh he was commissioned to preserve and protect. The entire covenant theory behind the Davidic throne rested upon Yahweh's unconditional promises for the future, ¹⁸ promises which could only be affirmed by a king in good faith. In such faith Ahaz was sorely wanting.

By the naming of his sons, and the proclaiming of the Immanuel prophecy, Isaiah attempted to force Ahaz to understand that for Ahaz's faith or the lack of it, Yahweh would act in history anyway. In 8: 11-15, Isaiah made it known that "Yahweh will become a sanctuary (for those few who believe) and a stone of stumbling and a rock of stumbling (for the majority who do not believe) to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the citizenry of Jerusalem, and many shall stumble thereon." ¹⁹ Yahweh had plans for his people, whether or not Ahaz had the ability to comprehend them. Ahaz's vassal treaty, the cornerstone of his foreign and domestic policies, might help Judah to survive for a

17. Gottwald, op. cit., pp. 155-156.

18. Bright, "History," op. cit., p. 272.

19. Gottwald, op. cit., p. 156.

time, but ultimately it would be a 'stone of stumbling'. On the one hand it would mean the present death of Yahweh worship and its traditions,²⁰ while on the other it would mean the future death of Judah itself as a political entity. In all fairness, it must be pointed out that history did not completely vindicate this last assertion, until ultimately Judah fell to Babylon. But as Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser after him moved south, Isaiah raised the mournful note which we find in 10: 27b-32. "He has gone up from Rimmon, he has come to Aiath;" and on down through Palestine, until ultimately "this very day he will halt at Nob, he will shake his fist at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem."²¹ In point of fact "Samaria itself was saved for this time from capture and destruction, owing to the fact that the party opposed to Pekah promptly murdered him, and presented his murderer, Hoshea, to the great king as his successor (734/3). "²² Tiglath-pileser then turned his attention

20. Guiseppe Ricciotti, The History of Israel, Vol. 1, trans. by Penta & Murphey, Milwaukee, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1958, p. 369.

21. Gottwald, op. cit., p. 152. Gottwald maintains that 10: 27b-32 was uttered as an oracle during the invasion of the northern kingdom by the Assyrians and that 8: 19-9:1 was uttered as an oracle in the aftermath of the attack. This latter unit, he presumes, was drawn up about 732 after the first stage of predictions was fulfilled. He is perhaps correct in considering 9: 1 as part of the unit following 8: 19, however it would seem that 18: 19 ff is too garbled a text to be considered a consistent oracle.

22. Kittel, op. cit., p. 347.

to Damascus which fell before him in 732.

After the death of Tiglath-pileser and subsequent rise of Shalmaneser IV, the international scene changed. The absence of the great Assyrian leader inspired the independent party in Samaria with new hope, a hope which was nourished, no doubt, by Egypt, which felt threatened by Tiglath-pileser's penetration into the West and South. Hoshea, when he felt he had calculated his odds aright, made overtures to Egypt and rebelled against Assyria. Isaiah, attuned to the inevitabilities of the situation and the foolishness of Hoshea and his colleagues, delivered his famous "Proud Drunkards of Ephraim" oracle (28: 1-4). This oracle, spoken approximately 726 or 725, castigates the misguided arrogance of the rulers of Samaria and speaks of its beauty as a fading flower. Recent commentators note that the original oracle, now comprising the first part, was later appended to 7-13 in which the same condition seemed later to prevail in Judah.²³ Hoshea's court apparently continued to revel with customary unconcern for its future dealings with Assyria, and Isaiah had little difficulty analysing their judgments of the

23. Bright, "Peake's," op. cit., p. 508, Scott, op. cit., pp. 313-314, Kissane, op. cit., p. 308, and Cheyne, op. cit., p. 183, agree that the original oracle has been appended to 7-13 which was perhaps added around 711 at the revolt of Ashdod, or more probably around 705, to refer to the alliances with Egypt, signed by Hezekiah, a situation somewhat similar to Hoshea's earlier revolt. Bright and Scott call 1-4 a unit, while Kissane and Cheyne favor 1-6.

international scene as being uninformed, clouded by personal arrogance, and far from any knowledge of the sort of balance maintained by Yahweh between national prides. Kittel seems to believe that during this period it was doubtless owing to Isaiah's influence that Ahaz kept quiet and resisted all the attempts which must have been made to allure him to revolt, thus aiding Samaria.²⁴

The result, as Isaiah had clearly seen, was inevitable. "Shalmaneser could not look calmly on at the revolt of Samaria, because the Assyrian supremacy over all Syria was at stake. He must have set out soon after his accession, possibly in the second year of his reign. For if the statement that Hoshea reigned nine years is correct, then Shalmaneser must have come against him as early as 725.²⁵ He besieged the city for three years until his death, and the task was continued by Sargon II. "The Biblical tradition, which seems to attribute the taking of Samaria to Shalmaneser, differs from the Assyrian documents which are quite explicit on this point and give the credit to Sargon II (722-705) who had become king on the death of his brother."²⁶ The fact that Samaria held out as long as it did is to its credit.

24. Kittel, op. cit., p. 350.

25. Ibid., p. 349.

26. Andre' Parrot, Nineveh and the Old Testament, London, SCM Press LTD., 1955, p. 44.

No sooner had Sargon left Samaria than minor revolts began occuring in various corners of his empire. Presumably Merodach-Baladan of Babylon, noticing Sargon's preoccupation in the West in 721, initiated a rebellion which drew the Assyrian's attention momentarily to that quarter of the globe.

Meanwhile the captured portions of Syria had already failed to reconcile themselves to their new status of being Assyrian provinces, and once more attempted to find deliverance in revolt. "

The Old Testament tells us nothing about it, but it is mentioned in Sargon's inscriptions. According to them, it appears that immediately after Sargon's departure from Syria the opposition to Assyria was organized anew. Iaubidi of Hamath headed the party of resistance. Almost all Syria to the north of Samaria joined in the rising. Samaria itself, willing or not, was drawn into the movement. In the South, Hamo of Gaza and the Egyptian Sue (Sabi') supported 27 the confederates.

It is possible that at this time there was agitation within Philistia to join in the revolt, a move which might well have provided the occasion for Isaiah's oracle against Philistia (14: 28-32). The introduction, placing the oracle in the year Ahaz died is probably a false later addition, for the rest of the oracle seems to warn Philistia against rising, simply because "the rod which smote you", almost assuredly an Assyrian king, is broken. If this refers to the death of an Assyrian king, that king was probably

27. Kittel, op. cit., p. 352.

Shalmaneser who died in 722, just two years prior to the proposed uprising. The only other possibility is that it was uttered in 715, during the build-up to the revolt of Ashdod in 713, but that would cause it to be rather remote from the death of any Assyrian king.²⁸

Judah, at any event, either remained neutral, or sympathetic toward the Assyrians, for she seemed to suffer no reprisals when in 720 Sargon overran Philistia, in particular subduing Gaza, the most southerly of the Philistine towns. By this time Assyria's intentions were quite clear, to keep up her hungry quest, even to the capture of Egypt and a virtual hegemony over the whole Near East, if possible.

It speaks well for Isaiah's understanding of the real essence of Assyrian power that he was not bluffed by the petty rulers of Palestine into thinking that these momentary coalitions had any chance of succeeding, but was able in each case to reprimand particular countries and their ruling factions (Samaria notably) for the self conceit and short sightedness which really possessed them.

For no sooner had Iaubidi of Hamath revolted with Egyptian agreements of support than Isaiah, apparently for the first time, sized up Egyptian support for what it was worth. The old twenty fourth dynasty had apparently fallen into hopeless chaos, in which condition they would be in

28. Gottwald, op. cit., pp. 163-164. Robinson, op. cit., p. 387.

a position to support no one. The internal rot which characterized Egypt of this period Isaiah adequately described in the oracle concerning Egypt in chapter 19. Even if we follow Procksch²⁹ and R.B.Y. Scott³⁰ in assigning verses 5-10 to a later date, verses 1-4 and 11-15 are quite explicit about Egypt's internal status.³¹ The Lord is riding upon a swift cloud into Egypt, where he will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian, and they will fight, every man against his brother, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. The spirit of the Egyptians will be emptied out, and they will stagger in their doings as a drunken man staggers in his vomit. Little help such a government could render! Indeed, in verse 4, Isaiah implies that Egypt itself is about to be taken over by another power, an event which did happen when the Ethiopian or twenty fifth dynasty took over in 716/15. Moreover, "it is a clear instance of the prophet's dialectic that he who opposed Ahaz's pro-Assyrian policy should at the same time warn an anti-Assyrian power that it would soon suffer a shattering setback."³²

Accordingly Iaubidi, for the lack of promised help, and overpowered upon Sargon's return to the West in 720,

29. In Kissane, op. cit., p. 210.

30. Scott, "Interp. Bib.," op. cit., p. 278.

31. Bright, "Peake's," op. cit., p. 163.

was beaten at Qarqar. From there the great king proceeded on his way south to squash the remainder of the rebellion.

THE REIGN OF HEZEKIAH

In 715 Ahaz died, and Hezekiah, a more confirmed Yahwist and slightly more seasoned political figure came to the throne, bringing with him a more stable set of values, and a more subtle understanding of Assyrian power. At the same time, the Ethiopian dynasty took over Egypt, providing that country once again with stable rule, an ascendancy in power, and a vital role in international diplomatic affairs. Even Isaiah later on, as we shall see, was impressed with the swiftness and grace of their diplomatic delegations. (ch.18)

From the very start, Isaiah attempted to gain a hearing with the new king, and from what we see of him later on, apparently succeeded. "From the start Isaiah was conscious that Hezekiah's Yahwism was limited by comparison with prophetic standards...",³³ despite the fact that Hezekiah posed as a rather effective religious reformer who had been greeted by his people with new hope.³⁴

Like Ahaz, Hezekiah hoped for a restoration of the kingdom of David. Babylon might help after Assyria had denied any assistance. He rebuilt the Millo upon Zion, restored the walls and towers, and filled the treasure chamber as the book of Chronicles relates with great credibility. A religious reform originating

33. Ibid., p. 169.

34. Scott., "Interp., Bib.", op. cit., p. 162.

from the temple in Jerusalem was to inaugurate the new age. 35

The reform was strongly based upon Mosaic-Deuteronomic thought inherited from the North and reinforced by Samaria's experience.

But the disturbing aspect of Hezekiah's policy was his overhasty inclination to accept the logic of his anti-Assyrian tendencies and to join in open revolt against the Assyrian overlords. Indeed, the king had a naïve tendency to identify Yahwism with anti-Assyrian policy, perhaps because of his predecessor's obsession with combining pro-Assyrian policy with syncretism, and therefore seemed always on the search for opportunities to form anti-Assyrian alliances. Such opportunities, moreover, were legion, so long as Sargon was occupied elsewhere, and Egypt appeared to be in stable hands. Consequently, "from this time onward Isaiah is concerned less with internal moral and religious conditions in Judah and more with the working out of God's purpose in international affairs." 36

Apparently it was not long after Hezekiah's accession that Egypt became involved in a major way in international diplomacy, an activity she was to maintain down to the invasion of Sennacherib in 701. That she started this early

35. Alfred Jeremias, The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East, Vol. II, trans. C. L. Beaumont, London, Williams & Norgate, p. 221. Also G. Ernest Wright, Biblical Archaeology, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1957, p. 164.

36. R. B. Y. Scott, "Isaiah 1-39," Interpretation, Vol. 8, 1953, p. 458.

is probably to be inferred from the fact that Isaiah, during the rebellion of Ashdod in 713, went naked in the streets as a sign against the new Ethiopian dynasty's attempts to form an anti-Assyrian coalition. (20: 1-2) Probably in the year 714, the first of these impressive delegations appeared at the court of Hezekiah, winning popular acclaim with ~~their~~ ^{its} grace, poise and beauty, and no doubt winning also the sympathy of Hezekiah. Even Isaiah had to pay them deep diplomatic respect, as a "...nation, tall and smooth,...a people feared near and far, a nation mighty and conquering, whose land the rivers divide." (18:2)

The historical situation had not yet become acute enough that Isaiah felt compelled to turn them down sharply and perhaps this early in the new king's career he was still trying to ingratiate himself at the court by moderation. Moreover, it would do no good to pass overhasty judgment upon two regimes which were yet little more than a year old apiece. Instead, the prophet merely reasserted, for their hearing, the integrity of the royal Yahwism, that Yahweh looks down from his dwelling upon Zion, and he alone will cut off the shoots with his pruning hook, in his own good time, leaving them for the birds of prey. Upon this victory, these tall, handsome, smooth people from afar will bring gifts of gratitude to the Lord of Hosts upon Zion. Apparently Isaiah was not able to prevent an alliance between Egypt and Judah from taking place, for "Hezekiah

was in alliance with Shabako (710/9 - 696/5) in 701," ³⁷ a fact which drew fire from Isaiah later on in that year when the international situation became tense. (30:1-7; 31:1-3) No doubt Isaiah's deep faith that Yahweh was the ultimate arbiter of issues between nations was received with diplomatic courtesy, but perhaps looked upon by the Ethiopians as an example of quaint religious provincialism at its best.

Under the impact of Egypt's apparent stability, the fervor for alliance and revolt spread throughout Palestine. "In the following years, 713 till 711, Judah took part in the risings which broke out in central Syria. In the annals of Sargon, as in the Bible, the part taken by Judah in a revolt originating in the seaport city of Philistia, Ashdod is expressly mentioned." ³⁸ Isaiah's warnings to the king were in vain, though his attempts were bold to the point of daring. "His position was that Yahweh had founded Zion and was its sufficient defense...until then let the people wait. While the plot was hatching, Isaiah went about Jerusalem barefoot and clad only in a loincloth like a war prisoner (ch. 20) symbolically protesting the disastrous results of reliance upon Egypt. " ³⁹

37. Bright, "Peakes", op. cit., p. 502.

38. Jeremias, op. cit., p. 220.

39. Bright, "History", op. cit., pp. 275-276.

His ideas were vindicated, as Egypt, unimpressed in the final moment with the nature of the alliance, pulled out, leaving the rest of the petty states to face Sargon unaided.

The aloofness of Egypt in this uprising suggests a definite tactic of Shabaka not to intervene as ineptly in Palestine as had So in 726 and Sib'e in 720. He wished to have full guarantee before his interventions and a league of two Philistine cities with the uncertain participation of two or three other south Palestinian states did not seem like a very promising coalition. In fact, on the basis of a seal impression of Shabaka found at Nineveh, it may be reasonably conjectured that the Pharaoh concluded peace with Assyria, a move which helped to confirm his Ethiopian dynasty ⁴⁰ as the dominant one.

In the face of such a formidable turn of events, Judah's survival at all appears miraculous, and can probably be explained either by the same natural difficulties in taking Jerusalem that hindered Sennacherib later, or else Sargon's plain lack of concern over the country.

In this same flux of events, following Sargon's advance in 720, or shortly after Hezekiah's accession in 715, there comes another oracle from Isaiah, this time directed towards Moab, and which seems to answer a Moabite appeal for help in the face of an invasion and fall. The oracle is not precisely datable, and we cannot be certain what invasion is referred to, or whether the use of the imperfect form

תְּהִינָּה (vs. 2) refers to a continuing action, in which case the invasion would be in progress, or a future

40. Gottwald, op. cit., p. 169.

action, in which case it would still be to come. The R.S.V. translates the total verse in a past sense, which might make better historical sense, providing the appeal was to Hezekiah shortly after his accession, for protection and help following invasions by either Jeroboam II of Israel, Shalmaneser, or Sennacherib.⁴¹ The close connection between the oracle and Jeremiah 48:29-38 has been pointed out by many commentators,⁴² a fact which questions even the Isaianic origin of the oracle.⁴³

Both Gottwald and Kissane would locate the oracle roughly in the early reign of Hezekiah, Kissane finding it impossible to locate an historical origin earlier than that time,⁴⁴ and Gottwald recognizing that it may have been an ancient taunt song against Moab, whose prototype celebrated an ancient Amorite defeat of Moab, but was employed in this form by Isaiah or a later editor, and even later by Jeremiah.⁴⁵

41. I. W. Slotki, Isaiah, Hebrew Text and English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary, London, The Soncino Press, 1949, p. 74.

42. Slotki, Gottwald, Bright, Scott, Kissane, noted above.

43. Albright, "Review of Robert Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament, JBL, 61, 1942, p. 119, offers the suggestion that both this poem and Jeremiah 48 refer to an irruption of Arab tribes into the Transjordanian lands c. 650, which ended Moab's existence as a strong autonomous state. If so, the poem was composed after the time of Isaiah and before that of Jeremiah and, because of its popularity and uncertain origin, found its way into the books of both prophets.

44. Kissane, op. cit., pp. 184-185.

45. Gottwald, op. cit., pp. 173-174.

To reconstruct the series of events, perhaps following invasions by either Shalmaneser, or even Sargon, Moab in its ruined, or deeply threatened state, sent envoys to Hezekiah for help or protection. Isaiah, perhaps recalling an ancient oracle delivered upon one such previous defeat of Moab makes use of its motifs to deliver a message, not entirely different from that given to the Ethiopian embassy at the same time. He encourages other countries to come to Jerusalem for counsel and justice, a motif which he seems to be building toward the day when all nations will submit their grievances to Jerusalem for prophetic arbitration under the guidance of Yahweh. (vs. 3) When the oppressor is no more, and destruction has ceased, a throne of David will be established which will be a source of justice and righteousness for all the peoples. (vss. 4-5)

In 705, Sargon of Assyria, the great conqueror of the South and West died. That death, coupled with the fact that the body was not returned to the capital city for burial, led many to believe that a change, and hopefully a weakening of Assyrian policy, had begun. In any event, it was the introduction of a new era of alliance and revolt for Egypt, Judah and Babylon, as well as other petty states which had been subject to Assyrian power.

The era had actually had its ideological inception earlier, in the reform of Hezekiah, when the Judaeen king attempted, after the fall of Samaria, to reform the North

and draw it within the sphere of his political influence, thus restoring the original integrity of the throne of David.⁴⁶ The territory involved may well have been granted to Ahaz earlier by the Assyrian government in gratitude for his pro-Assyrian stance, a policy which was practiced by Assyrian kings on the theory that the allowance of autonomy would produce loyalty, an amazingly liberal viewpoint.⁴⁷ "This reform was in itself a political movement, an assertion of Judah's independence. On the death of Sargon and in the unrest which inevitably followed, this assertion of independence found expression in open revolt."⁴⁸

It is interesting in this light to note that Alt defends the idea that Sennacherib later made the outerlying Judaeen cities an enlargement of the Philistine state, both to provide a buffer zone of loyalty between himself and Jerusalem, and to break down the old pattern of loyalty between these cities and the Davidic throne, recentering their loyalty toward Philistia and thereby indirectly toward himself, and completely shattering the very Davidic ideology which Isaiah and Hezekiah attempted to rebuild.⁴⁹

46. Wright, op. cit., p. 164. Also, Rev. E.W. Todd, "The Reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah," The Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 9, 1956, pp. 290-291.

47. Todd, op. cit., p. 288.

48. Ibid., p. 291.

49. Albrecht Alt, "Die Territorialgeschichte Bedeutung Von Sanheribs Eingriff in Palästina," Kleine Schriften Zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel, Band II, Munchen, C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1953, p. 245.

This idea finds some support from the fact that jar handles bearing royal seals, and found in towns within this area ⁵⁰ have been identified by Clermont-Ganneau, Bliss, Mc Cown, and Albright as being of very probable Assyrian origin. Moreover, a change in the symbolism of the royal seals occurs about the time of Josiah, whose reform may well have purged such foreign influence. ⁵¹ At any rate, certain diplomatic and ideological foundations for revolt had already been laid in Hezekiah's reign prior to 705.

The first direct and practical moves in the revolt seem to have been made by Merodach-Baladan of Babylon, a man with a genius for political recoup, and a flare for "thorn in the flesh" tactics which could in time exhaust the patience of the greatest of conquerors.

The death of Sargon in 705 B.C. gave Marduk-apal-iddina (Merodach-Baladan) a new opportunity. This time he determined to organize a general revolt over the whole of the Assyrian empire. He secured support at once from practically all the tribes, Aramaean, Arab and Akkadian, in and about lower Mesopotamia, and entered once more into an alliance with Elam. But he was not content with a local rising, and did his best to stir up trouble for ⁵² Sennacherib in the far West.

His diplomatic envoys appeared in Jerusalem shortly after Hezekiah's illness to congratulate him upon his

50. Tell ed-Duweir, Tell en-Nasbeh, Tell ej Judeideh, Beth Shemesh, Tell Zakariyeh, Tell Sandahamah, Tell Safiyeh, Tell Beit Mirsim, Khirbet et Tubeiqah.

51. David Diringer, "The Royal Jar-Handle Stamps," The Biblical Archaeologist, Vol. 12, No. 4, Dec. 1949, pp. 74-75.

52. Robinson, op. cit., p. 388.

recovery, and were generously taken on a tour of the royal armoury, complete enough so that Hezekiah could admit frankly to Isaiah, "...there is nothing in my storehouses that I did not show them." (II Kings 20:15) It is probably safe to conclude that some form of treaty was concluded, and there is a chance that the envoys, or others like them, may have attempted a similar deal with Egypt.

Hezekiah, either as part of the general plan, or privately, opened his own negotiations with Egypt. Isaiah's plea that the diplomatic envoys be recalled went unheeded in Hezekiah's haste to please the rapidly growing pro-Egyptian party in his own government, and to regain Judah's independence along with the re-establishment of the Davidic throne to its once proud place. ⁵³

At the same time, Hezekiah intervened in Philistine affairs, marshalling behind himself the support of the Philistine people, who immediately handed over to him their reluctant, pro-Assyrian king, Padi, to be imprisoned in Jerusalem. It seems that Jerusalem was selected by the confederates as a center of activity and operations because of its centrality among the allied nations and its proven defensibility as a fortress. ⁵⁴

53. Kittel, op. cit., p. 365.

54. Robinson, op. cit., p. 388.

In 701 B.C.E. the Assyrian army invaded Palestine and crushed the rebellion, after defeating a large Egyptian and Ethiopian host which had advanced northward to relieve the beleaguered town of Ekron. The strong frontier fortress of Lachish was stormed, as vividly pictured in the Assyrian reliefs, and the fortified towns-forty six in number, according to the Assyrians-fell in rapid succession. Hezekiah thereupon capitulated, paying an extremely heavy tribute, listed in detail by the Assyrian records, which agree substantially with the much briefer summary in Kings. According to the Assyrian annals, Sennacherib also turned over a strip of Jewish territory in the Shephelah to the three neighboring Philistine principalities. 55

What happened beyond this point, aside from the fact that the coalition was a failure depends upon whether one accepts the one or the two campaign theory of Sennacherib. Presumably this was the last of Sennacherib's campaigns, and over and above the paying of the tribute, Jerusalem was saved.

During the formation of this massive coalition, and into the early part of Sennacherib's campaign, Isaiah continued, more emphatically, to assert his policy of trust in Yahweh, and non-^{entanglement}~~intervention~~ in alliances. If Jerusalem were to be a mediator between nations, it would be as a place where nations could submit their problems peaceably for adjudication, and not as a place for the formation of war alliances.

While preparations for the revolt were underway, and Hezekiah was constructing the Siloam tunnel to supply the city with water during the expected siege, Isaiah repeatedly

55. W. F. Albright, The Biblical Period, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1952, pp. 43-44.

emphasized two main points: first anti-Assyrian alliances with Egypt and Babylon, as well as with petty states, were futile in the face of the massive potential of the Assyrian state, and second, a new element in his thought, that Assyria had now over-reached itself, and that in the divine economy of Yahweh's control of history, was due for a major setback, one to be accomplished through the sheer flux of history, largely without human assistance. With these ideas in mind, Isaiah openly opposed Hezekiah's relationship with Merodach-Baladan.

He also became more and more unyielding in his assessment of the alliance with Egypt, and his attacks upon Hezekiah's increasing reliance in that direction became correspondingly more violent. No doubt he felt that as the international situation worsened, Hezekiah, increasingly aware of his own vulnerability as the center of the system of alliances, was beginning to look hopefully for the support promised by the impressive Ethiopians. But Isaiah remembered all too well the past performance of the Egyptians who had backed out on Ashdod, allowing it to face Assyria unaided. His attacks were probably justified; "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are very strong but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the Lord!" The Egyptians are men and not God, flesh and not spirit. Yahweh who still governs history will cause them to perish together. (31:1-3)

His attacks are repeated again in 30: 1-7. "Those who elevate armed force to the level of final arbiter will therefore fall when Yahweh stretches forth his hand to prove that his is the decisive word in history." 56

Isaiah's second main emphasis appeared as something new and unprecedented in the direction of his thought hitherto, and no doubt created considerable confusion for Hezekiah who was always patient in his attempts to understand the logical ambiguities of the prophet. On the eve of Sennacherib's invasion, Isaiah came to the conclusion that Assyria had over-reached herself, that in the divine economy and the nemesis of events, she was marching to her downfall, largely unaided by opposition. His position brought disgust from Hezekiah, who in the press of rapidly changing events had little time for theory, and scoffing from the citizens, for whom the threat by this time was all too real.

Hitherto, prophecy had been concerned almost exclusively with the punishment of Israel and Judah at the hands of foreign powers. Now for the first time a foreign nation was actually itself to be castigated for its pretensions and excesses as a world conqueror. Again Yahweh emerges as a controlling principle in the interweaving of international events. He "...has set a limit to the wrongs of Assyria and has, with the death of Sargon, at last broken the rod

56. Gottwald, op. cit., pp. 179-180.

and staff which has struck the peoples in rage with unending blows and lorded it over the nations in wrath with unceasing oppression." 57

Isaiah is concerned first of all to make it clear that Assyria's destruction is an integral part of Yahweh's plan in history. In the oracle 14: 24-27, he states that it is Yahweh's intention to break the Assyrian upon Judaeen land and to trample him underfoot on its mountains. This is not to be thought of as a concern only of Judaeen history, but is part of a larger purpose laid out on a world wide scale, and will be affected by Yahweh whose hand is stretched out over the whole earth.

In the oracle 10: 5-15, the prophet then goes on to broaden the concept of that purpose by presenting the inner reasoning behind it. The exact extent of the oracle is difficult to determine, as the conclusion is composed of three units, none of which matches the integrity of the rest of the oracle. Verses 5-15 most probably form the foundational unit.

Basically the problem with Assyria is one of pride and overbearing arrogance. The proud tone of the Assyrian commanders, the revelry in conquest and plunder, the scoffing at the enemy are altogether typical of the Assyrian battle records. The Assyrian went out in the name of the god Ashur;

57. Ibid., p. 175.

before that god expressed all the emotions of war and postures of humility, and before him was responsible for bringing home victory. The victorious king was a recipient of divine favors, whereas disaster was brought upon the land by ill fated rulers. In a state where the ruler was not divine, he was at the mercy of his gods. E. A. Speiser has therefore pointed out that "the mortal ruler was forever intent on pleasing the cosmic powers....There were times when the need was urgent to establish direct contact with the distant gods. In a literate society distances can be neutralized through writing." ⁵⁸ One of the frequently occurring types of writing was the annals of the kings themselves, in which such boasting was prominent. The egocentrism displayed in the annals, then, was presumably not mere conceit.

Isaiah surely could not have been ignorant of this reason for the Assyrian's proud boasting, but rather chose to ignore the reason for it, lest it involve the recognition of the holiness of gods other than Yahweh. ⁵⁹ What the Assyrians have done, they have done, whatever be the reasoning behind it, and their act is one of pride in the face of Yahweh.

The pride of Assyria had led to a related abuse, namely that Assyria had exceeded her function as a rod of Yahweh's

58. E. A. Speiser, "Ancient Mesopotamia," Robert C. Dentan, ed., The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1955, p. 63.

59. Gottwald, op. cit., p. 181.

anger against his people. In all the long years since Tiglath-pileser, Assyria had never once changed her foreign policies in order to make them match the times so that they would represent a responsible attitude in the attempt to balance world power. Assyria's real aim was not peace or justice, but her own aggrandizement. Her pride was purely in her own selfish achievements. She boasted and strutted through the Near East, thinking the world her own by divine right. "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I have understanding." (10:13) She had ceased to be Assyria, the tool of Yahweh, and had tried to become Yahweh himself. To Isaiah's mind, she had served her usefulness in the divine scheme, and would therefore be caused to fall.

This final purpose of Yahweh, according to Isaiah, would be world wide in its import, **for**"...the peoples who have been wronged by Assyria will all be relieved by the breaking of Assyrian power and not Judah alone. Thus the design and the hand of Yahweh, while especially active in the life of the covenant people, also extended to the activities of the nations." ⁶⁰

For crimes committed against Judah, she will be broken, however, on Judaeon soil. Thus will Jerusalem be preserved; Yahweh will again show his power through her

60. Ibid., p. 184.

cult traditions, and through the preservation of the Davidic dynasty, as a source of peace and justice. His promises remain sure in the working out of his plan for history. "However one-sided this estimate, it is at any rate made by this prophet on the basis of a wide familiarity with Assyrian policies and methods and it is a case so presented that neither Judah, the victim, nor Assyria, the aggressor, can take any special pride but must rather each face up to its own wrong doings." ⁶¹ All must face the reality of Yahweh, who controls events, who moderates the historical process, and who rules how and where he will.

As Sennacherib advanced toward Phoenicia, Isaiah was heard to raise a mock against Tyre and Sidon, the latter of which was a dominant city politically and commercially. (23: 1-12) As the invasion moved closer to Jerusalem, he probably included also the lament against the corrupt inward state of Judah itself in chapter 1:4-9. The final devastation of Palestine was cataclysmic, and the real power of the Davidic throne shorn to the point that Hezekiah's successor, Manasseh, was largely devoid of influence. That he probably received the contempt of Isaiah when the latter was along in years may be enforced by a separate tradition that the king finally had the aged prophet put to death.

61. Ibid., p. 183.

Even Hezekiah, for all his patience with the prophet, probably understood him only imperfectly, and at other times not at all. Certainly the depth of Isaiah's thought, which in its complexity could reconcile polarities which to most political minds were, and still are, mutually contradictory, must have baffled the king exceedingly, especially during periods of crisis when minds move rapidly and deal with facts on the surface, and deal with them rapidly. T.H. Robinson's assessment is probably correct.

Hezekiah entirely failed to appreciate either Isaiah's policy or the reasons for it. He has been, perhaps, over-glorified by that Deuteronomic tradition whose sole test of righteous kingship lay in the royal attitude towards the local sanctuaries. It is not suggested that Hezekiah was a bad man or a bad king, but he certainly did not rise above his fellows in practical statesmanship, and still less could he attain to the heights of Isaiah's religious convictions.⁶²

THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF DIPLOMATIC THOUGHT

Despite the many ambiguities which have frustrated students of Isaiah quite as much as they did Hezekiah himself, there emerges from Isaiah's reactions to the press of the world events of his time, a dialectic which shows him to be a great prophet of his faith and an astute statesman of his era. The whole of his practical thought flows ultimately from a keen awareness of the presence of Yahweh, who though the prophet may not always understand him thoroughly, is

62. Robinson, op. cit., p. 392.

nonetheless in control of the events of history. To trust in him and to search after the truth which he initiates, is to find a sanctuary from the confusion of the times in a sturdy sense of direction. To disregard him is to trip over him in one's own attempt to pursue life.

Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, who had a special connection with his people at Zion, had also a plan for the nations. There was a purpose in the midst of history toward which the chaotic events of half a century had been moving in spite of appearances to the contrary. All other gods disappear as effective forces in international life, although they may continue to exert influence in private and domestic matters. Yahweh's holy transcendence stands against all human creatureliness, and especially against 63 political and national creatureliness.

The chief sin of man is that of pride, that force which causes him to take insufficient account of his tendency to corrupt and distort his creative powers, and which causes him to rationalize his own crimes in the name of the people. What is immoral under the name 'murder' becomes moral under the name 'war', where man symbolizes his pride as a patriotic virtue, and supports it with that technology which mirrors his own definition of progress.

International crimes, therefore, become the arch theological sin, for they are committed by men in places of leadership who fail to differentiate between themselves and the responsibilities they represent. They will throw restraints to the wind in their quest for personal power,

63. Gottwald, op. cit., p. 204.

and will use the dangerously large and complex forces of society with a rationale which does not transcend that which they would use in the very smallest matters of their personal lives. Before the terror which they inflict, the weak must seek shelter under the strong, a position in which they become another's benefactor, and are shorn of their due justice and personal dignity. At the basis of this struggle lies the secret desire of every nation to turn the precariousness of human history, the uncertainty of human life, into stability for itself, at the expense of the justice and security of others. Therein lies the basic immorality of the political order.

Out from the ranks of the human struggle bursts the voice of the prophet that Yahweh is the only stable agent in history; only his plans can moderate the struggles of nations toward peace; only trust in him can even out the differences between peoples, squelch human prides, and create in all men a mind for justice. "The plan of Yahweh possesses a unity beyond human comprehension, for the parts visible to any one man at any one time are often strangely and bafflingly inconsistent."⁶⁴ One must trust the word of Yahweh, even though it may seem to the majority of men in power at the time to be wrong.

To wait upon Yahweh is not to resign oneself to fatalism or determinism, but through trust and obedience,

64. Ibid., p. 207.

to become a participant and explorer after the truth which Yahweh has set out as the purpose and goal of creation. It is to recognize the judgment of God as a fire, racing through history, striking hither and yon among the nations, consuming fault and shortsightedness on all sides, and working for an ultimate reconciliation of all men.

The practical implications of his theory, Isaiah could not be expected to have worked out in full; indeed men are struggling with them yet today. But he did conceive, ideally, of a time when nation would not life up sword against nation, a time when all countries would submit their grievances to disinterested prophetic arbitration upon Mount Zion, the place of Yahweh who controls the events of history. The basic plan for such a summit conference consideration of justice was presented in chapter 2:1-4.

There was not included in Isaiah's view the notion that other countries must sacrifice the worship of their gods for the worship of Yahweh, but rather that in the matter of grievances between countries, nations would submit their grievances to an impartial group whose only consideration would be justice in the face of the divine reality of the universe, and the law which could be derived therefrom for each specific situation. Here, if anywhere in his thought, Isaiah seems to transcend his adherence to the Davidic dynasty and the Jerusalemite traditions. He does not exclude these traditions, but at this vital point, he recognizes the transcendence of Yahweh over all nations, including

Judah. The impelling force of this concept was undoubtedly the sheer disappointment encountered in his experience with foreign relations through some forty years of work, and his discovery that regional interests invariably stood in the way of the ultimate objectives of peace and justice. Perhaps only the compelling force of Yahweh's presence would suffice to shake the nations loose from their self interested concepts of national sovereignty, and redirect them toward a disinterested pursuit of the truth through international arbitration.

From Isaiah's new idea there emerges a concept which is intriguing in its implications, namely, that war is a 'learned' activity, an approach which, rather than being an inherent part of man, as despair would lead one to believe, is something to which men have become conditioned. "He does not hold that the eradication of war will bring about an eradication of evil in human nature or vice versa, that the elimination of armed conflict requires first the removal of evil from the human heart." ⁶⁵ Nations will continue to exist in tension with one another, but there ought to be a machinery for adjudication which can the more effectively replace the less honorable machinery of war.

What the nature of that machinery is to be is a question of crucial importance. Here Isaiah seems forced to rely rather heavily, again, upon amphictyonic and Jerusalemite

65. Ibid., pp. 202-203.

traditions. He does not anticipate that nations could come together and automatically agree on issues of conflict, unless they were willing to sacrifice a certain degree of their sovereignty to an impartial group of arbiters.

The arbitration is to be reached by 'Torah' and 'debar' Yahweh, which can only mean the deliberation of prophets. Isaiah had thought of himself as instructor of Judah and of the nations as well, at least since the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis of 735-732, and he regarded his own words and public signs as serving the purposes of instruction (8:16-18,,; 30:8) 66

Just how such a confederation of prophets was to be organized, and how it was to operate we are not told; we are only made aware of its import. Nor are we necessarily told when it would come about. The phrase 'in the latter days' is probably to signify that Yahweh would bring it about in his own time by his own sovereignty. The day would come when Yahweh's Word would go out to all nations from Jerusalem. This city of cities, this crossroads of the Near East, which had for so long symbolized the strife of international tension and conflict, would now symbolize the reign of peace and justice. For Yahweh had chosen it as his dwelling place, and he had chosen well.

66. Ibid., pp. 202-203.

CONCLUSIONS

The position which this thesis has sought to maintain and defend throughout, is that Isaiah, as a prophet and political figure, (1) founded the intent and substance of his oracles upon Jerusalemite traditions which represented an amalgamation of Yahwistic faith with pre-Israelite traditions, and which included the concepts of Zion as the holy mountain upon which Yahweh dwelt, and the Davidic monarchy as the source of prosperity and stability for the country, and (2) molded, manipulated, and used these inherited traditions in response to the impact of the specific historic circumstances of his time. By using these traditions with great skill and considerable accuracy, he showed himself to be both a great prophet of Yahweh and a creative political realist and astute statesman within the Judaeen kingdom of the eighth century B.C.

The fact that he founded his attitude toward Zion and the Davidic monarchy upon inherited Jerusalemite and pre-Israelite traditions can now be clearly seen in the parallels existing between the Hebrew and Canaanite attitudes toward royal theology and the various strands in Isaiah which deal with the function and theory of the Davidic dynasty. The first line of parallels which can be drawn is that between the Hebrew concept of kingship and certain general near eastern kingship practices, especially the practices of Canaanite kingship. These were traditions which became a part of Israelite royal theology as a result of David's capture

of Jerusalem, an act which along with the transference of the Ark to Jerusalem, ultimately cloaked the old Yahwistic faith in the garb of Canaanite theology and royal ideology. While these Canaanite practices were altered under the impact of Yahwism, certain definite motifs became present under the new social ideology which were not inherent in Israel's amphictyonic faith, among these, (1) the view of the king as a priestly type of figure, sacral in character, and standing between God and men, (2) the divine sonship of the king by adoption, (3) the participation of the king in an enthronement festival of Yahweh, and (4) the king as the guarantee of prosperity and social order.

It was noted then that similar parallels were to be found in those strands of Isaiah's writings which dealt with the prophet's relation to, and views concerning, the Davidic monarchy, particularly chapters 7-11, in which Isaiah confronted Ahaz on the eve of the Syro-Ephraimitic War in 735. The analysis of the announcement of the royal birth showed that similar announcements, using similar terms and bearing similar forms were known to the writers of the Canaanite epics discovered at Ras Shamra, and that in both cases the king was viewed as a sacral person, whose presence symbolized the relation of the god to his people, a motif which found expression in the Immanuel sign which Isaiah used to hail the birth of the royal child. In the enthronement liturgy of chapter 9: 1-6, the sonship of the king to God was noted

to be of a type similar to the adoptive relationship expressed in other Old Testament references, and with the addition of the coronation liturgy in 11: 1-9, Isaiah's use of the traditions of the king-cult became virtually complete. Isaiah also shared with the Canaanite culture the importance of the continuation of the dynasty, a motif to be found both in the Karit epic as well as in the prophet's confrontation of Ahaz.

These pre-Israelite Jerusalem traditions were carried over also into his domestic policy, where, it was noted, his grand scheme for the social order of Israel was based upon the Zion and David traditions. The Zion tradition which distinguished Isaiah from most of the other prophets, became the vehicle by which Isaiah demonstrated that Yahweh's presence in Jerusalem was necessary for the existence and preservation of the social order. The concept of Yahweh's dwelling upon his sacred mountain, paralleled in Canaanite thought, became, for Isaiah, the assurance of that power which was responsible for holding all the various elements of the social order within their fixed places and determined functions. Added to this, the David tradition was seen as the necessary human means through which Yahweh, present upon Mount Zion, preserved the social order and maintained an ethical relation to his people. Isaiah further believed that beyond any destruction of Judah, as a result of Yahweh's judgment, the restoration of the social order would be founded upon these twin traditions,

insofar as those traditions could be used as vehicles of the people's expression of faith in Yahweh.

Finally, in his role as international diplomat and critic, Isaiah conceived of Zion as the summit meeting place to which all nations would gather together to seek the Word of Yahweh through prophetic arbitration, and thus achieve peace. His wide ranging international experience for half a century had taught him that international conflict was the result of that pride which causes a nation to act solely upon the basis of its own sovereignty, attempting to turn the precariousness of history into security for itself, at the expense of weaker nations, and thus believing itself to be the only stable agent in history. To the sorry international picture created by such self aggrandizing reasoning, Isaiah proclaimed Yahweh to be the only stable agent in history, and urged that only trust in him could cause all nations to seek together for the truth.

To achieve this end, it would be necessary for Yahweh to address the nations from his dwelling place on Mount Zion. In all matters of grievance between countries, nations would have to submit all issues to an impartial council of prophets, whose only consideration would be justice in the face of the divine reality of the universe, and whatever law could be derived therefrom for each specific situation. The day would come when Yahweh's Word would thus go out to all the nations from Mount Zion, and war would be no more.

Jerusalem, which for so long had been a symbol of apostasy from Yahweh and international strife, would become the abode of those who were considered holy, and the center from which that holiness would emanate to the rest of the world. In that day, the destiny which had been foreordained for Jerusalem in her traditions, would be fully realized.

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